OFF THE MAIN TRACK

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM OF THE MARATHAS

THE MILITARY SYSTEM OF THE MARATHAS

SIVA CHHATRAPATI : *Extracts and Documents relating to Maratha History, Vol. I.*

FOREIGN BIOGRAPHIES OF SHIVAJI : *Extracts and Documents relating to Maratha History, Vol. II.*

STUDIES IN INDIAN HISTORY

EARLY CAREER OF KANHOJI ANGRIA AND OTHER PAPERS

পেশবাদিগের রাষ্ট্রশাসন পদ্ধতি

ব্রাহ্মণ-রোমান ক্যাথলিক সংবাদ

অশোক

হিন্দুগৌরবের শেষ অধ্যায়

প্রাচীন বাঙ্গালা পত্র সঙ্কলন (*Records in Oriental Languages, Vol. I.*)

OFF THE MAIN TRACK. BY SURENDRANATH SEN

MITRA AND GHOSH
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PREFACE

Of the eleven papers reprinted in the following pages nine deal with unimportant records. It is time that we should recognise the value of such documents as they often throw unexpected light on the social and economic condition of the country. That is the only excuse for straying out of the main track of general history and loitering in the by-lanes and blind alleys.

My grateful thanks are due to Professor Anil Chandra Banerjee, M.A., P.R.S., and Mr. Saurindra Nath Ray, M.A., for reading the proofs and seeing the book through the press. But for their ungrudging assistance this little volume would never have seen light.

Surendranath Sen

Imperial Record Department,
New Delhi, the 14th August, 1944.

CONTENTS

Survival of Some Aśokan Forms in Seventeenth Century Bengali

Migration of words forms a fascinating study and no less interesting is that of survival of peculiar verbal forms in widely separated regions. Language may not provide a sufficiently convincing evidence of racial origin or affinity but a common word certainly indicates cultural contact in the past. Aśoka, the Mauryan king, lived and ruled in the third century B. C.; Dom Antonio do Rozario was captured and sold into slavery by the pirates of Arakan in 1663 A. D. Between the times of the Maurya king and those of the Christian missionary there is an interval of two thousand years. But they belonged to the same country and it may be argued that the survival of certain *Prākṛt* words, used by Aśoka in the Bengali prose work of Dom Antonio do Rozario need not cause any surprise. We might have ignored the reappearance of Aśokan forms in seventeenth century Bengali but for the region of their origin.

Dom Antonio was a Bengali prince and not a Portuguese nobleman as his name may lead us to think. A son of the king of Bhusna, he was carried away by the Magh pirates of Arakan and sold into slavery. A Portuguese missionary took pity on him and rescued him from a miserable fate and taught him the tenets of Christianity. Converted into his benefactor's faith, Antonio, for so he had been named after his conversion, returned home and preached Christianity among his country-men. Ultimately he compiled a dialogue in Bengali, entitled "Argumento e Disputa sobre a Ley", which proved very useful to his brother missionaries in their religious controversy with the Brahmins. The dialogue was, therefore, carefully transcribed and a manuscript copy, the only one so far known to us, found its way to Evora in Portugal[1].

1 Published by the Calcutta University Press and edited by me in 1937.

As a treatise on doctrinal polemics or Hindu mythology it is of little use, but it is the earliest prose work in Bengali, and as such, provides an interesting specimen of seventeenth century Bengali. Curiously enough, there are remarkably few words of Persian and Arabic origin in this missionary work, although Persian was the court language of the day and a scion of an aristocratic family of Bengal, as Dom Antonio was, was expected to be quite familiar with the language and literature of Persia. Dom Antonio's prose is interesting from another point of view. The phrases and the idioms he used are still current in some parts of Eastern Bengal, and his vocabulary goes a long way to prove that the phonetics of the Eastern Bengal dialect, except in very few cases, has undergone but slight or no variation during the last two centuries and a half.

One of the exceptions, however, is of unusual interest and carries us back to the days of Aśoka Maurya. To-day the word *pūrva*, in polished Bengali and colloquial language, is used with reference to the past. One would ordinarily expect the same form or *pūva* in Dom Antonio's prose. But he invariably writes "prob" (p. 6), "prube" (p. 41) and "probbe" (p. 51), the sound in each case being the same, as Portuguese *O* has in some cases the same sound as English *U*. Dom Antonio was not unfamiliar with the Sanskrit form of the word, for in one place he writes *opurbo*, which is the Bengali phonetical rendering of Sanskrit *Apūrva*. Curiously enough we find the similar transformation of *pūrva* into *pruva* in Aśoka's inscriptions. If this peculiar form occurred in the Dhauli and Jaugad versions in the neighbouring province of Kalinga it would have caused little surprise, but it is found at Girnar in far off Surashtra or Kathiawad and at Shabazgarhi and Mansera in the North-Western Frontier Province. E. g.

Girnar V.—4,

Na bhūtapruvam dhaṁma-mahāmāta nāma.

Shabazgarhi IV—8 *Na bhutapruve tadiśe*

V—11 *No bhutapruva dhramma-m (ha)ma(tra) nama*

VI—14 *Nabhutapruvam.*

na (hu) ta pr(u)ve tadise.

Mansera—IV—14

na (hu) ta pr(u)ve tadiśe

V—21

na bhuta-pruva dhrama (ma)hamatra nama

VI—27

na huta pruve.

At Jaugad and Dhauli, nearer home, we find *pruvam* and *pruve* substituted by *puluva* and *puluve* (Reference is to HULTZSCH's *Asoka Inscriptions*). Not that Dom Antonio's Bengali had no affinity with Aśokan *Prākṛt* of Dhauli and Jaugad ; for instance, the *Prākṛt* form *munisa* and *munise* of Dhauli, Jaugad and Topra are not only found in Dom Antonio's dialogue but are still current in some of the Eastern Bengal dialects.

It is well known that modern Bengali has a close affinity with Western *Prākṛt*. Dom Antonio's "prub" supplies but one link in the chain of evidence. But one may naturally ask how this form found its way to Bengal from Kathiawad and the North-West Frontier Province although it is not found in the intermediate provinces at Kalsi, Kosam, Sarnath, Gaya and other find spots of Asokan rock, pillar and cave-inscriptions.

Some Sculptural Devices in the Architecture of the Purana Qila

One of the most interesting spots in the Imperial city of Delhi is the Purana Qila. Popular belief identifies the site with Indraprastha where King Yudhisthira of the Mahabhārata held his court. The legend is at least as old as the *Tarikh-i-Daudi* and the *Ain-i-Ākbari* according to which Humayun and Sher Shah built a citadel over Indrapat. As Page observes, "It cannot be said with accuracy how much of the citadel is the work of Humayun and how much of it is that of Sher Shah, for the difference in the architecture of the two periods is very slight." The citadel covers a wide area, the circuit of the walls alone measuring more than a mile. The massive walls, very high and thick, are further strengthened by huge bastions which were once covered by a number of *chattris*. The walls are pierced by three principal gates and four wickets or *khirkis*. The ramparts of the Purana Qila do not possess the grace or the beauty of those of Shahjahan's Red Fort but their height and solidarity cannot fail to impress the visitor even after the lapse of so many centuries. The gates of Shahjahan's fort have no other decorations except the lotus in different patterns, while the northern and southern gates of the Purana Qila have remarkable animal figures sculptured on white stones which deserve more than a passing notice. The northern gate of the Old Fort is called the *Talaqi Darwaza* or the forbidden gate. Page writes, "The Talaqi gate may be justly said to be one of the most striking monuments of Delhi, the chattris on its summit towering between the Delhi-Muttra Road and the citadel some 127 feet above the level of the low lying ground. It consists of a lofty arch 14′ 9″ in width and 56′ 2″ in height and containing two lesser arched opening 9′ 10″ and 10′ 9″ in

width and 14′ 8″ and 16′ in height respectively marking the lowest and the first floor levels.* From back wall to front the gate measures 64 feet. The main archway, in the head of which is an apperture through which missiles or quick-lime could be dropped on the heads of an attacking party, is enclosed in a frame of yellow sandstone, relieved by recessed and ornamented panels, the yellow sandstone giving place at the level of the second floor to red stone of the same variety. This floor level is also indicated by two oriels, of the typical Hindu type, one on either side of the archway, carried on four brackets and projecting some four feet from the face of the main wall. The roofs of these oriels are supported by dwarf columns and enriched by tile ornamentation. The spandrels of the main arch are in black marble and relieved, as are the spandrels below, by bosses of red sandstone." The harmonious blending of the Hindu and Muslim styles of architecture is not the only interesting feature of this gateway. Immediately above the top of each oriel we find two panels of carved white stones representing a huge lion engaged in a deadly combat with a puny man. The western or the main gate has the customary lotus decorations only. In the south gate, also known as the Humayun gate, we find two miniature marble elephants most admirably and realistically executed instead of the fighting lions.

Without going into the current controversy it may be generally assumed that the gateways were constructed in Sher Shah's time. Both Sher Shah and Humayun were orthodox Muslims and Muslim rulers were usually averse to sculptural representations of animal figures. No other Muslim monument in Delhi has anything akin to the lions or the elephants of the Purana Qila though floral designs and geometrical decorations are quite common. The presence of such decorations on the gateways of Sher Shah's fort is, therefore, particularly significant. One is naturally inclined to enquire whether the fighting lions of the *Talaqi* Gate had something more than an ornamental purpose.

It is well-known that one of the most important incidents of the great Pathan ruler's career was a mortal encounter with a *sher*, which gave him the title by which he is known to posterity. Some of the modern writers translate the word *sher* as tiger. Dorn, however, in his translation of Niamatulla's *Makhzana-i-Afghana* says that the beast, killed by Sher Shah, was a lion. According to some authorities, Sher Shah fought it with a sword. Lions have become completely extinct in Northern India to-day, but they were not so rare in this part of the country in Sher Shah's days. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the exploit which raised Sher Shah in the estimation of his master was a single-handed combat with a lion and not with a tiger. Is this sculpture then reminiscent of one of the most important events in the Pathan soldier's early career? A definite answer is difficult to give, but it is strange that such a sculpture should be found in one of the gateways built by Sher Shah. If Samudra Gupta left an undying proof of his musical skill on the coins bearing his effigy, is it too much to believe that Sher Shah, despite the definite injunction of his religion against representation of animal figures, should insert in one of the principal gateways of the newly built citadel two sculptured stones to commemorate one of the most daring deeds of which he was rightly proud? It is not suggested for a moment that the human figure in the carved stone is an actual portrait of the Pathan King, but it was probably designed as a perpetual tribute to the courage and skill in arms that earned the encomiums of friends and foes alike. If this surmise is correct then we are entitled to assume that Sher Shah killed the lion not with a sword but with a spear. In one of the sculptured stones the spear is still intact. In the other, the upper part of the shaft has completely disappeared. The human combatant looks puny and small in comparison with the huge size of the raging beast, which towers above his head with raised paws and gaping mouth. He is seen to make an upward thrust of his long spear at the throat of the lion which

evidently put it out of action. The sculptor probably deliberately made the man so diminutive in order to emphasise his daring and his skill. The animal figures in the gate opposite also deserve a careful scrutiny. The elephant is an animal of auspicious omen in India and whether the sculptures on the north and the south gates of Purana Qila have an historical value or not, they conclusively prove that Sher Shah was not so fanatic a Muslim as he has been represented to have been by some of his modern apologists. On the top of the third or the last arch of the *Talaqi Darwaza* one notices a crude representation of the sun. It is a circular figure with rays around it and a couple of eyes in the centre. Whether it has any special significance, it is difficult to say, but apparently Sher Shah was a good son of India and was not averse to borrow from the indigenous architecture and sculpture of the land of his birth some of his decorative motifs.

Some Police Problems of Old Calcutta

What worried the Calcutta Police most in 1793 ? The city was still in its infancy, the population must have been small, judged by modern standards the traffic control should have been comparatively easy, though the usual complements of law-breakers and evil-doers must have been there. But uneasy lies the head of a Police Superintendent in every age and every clime, and the Calcutta of 1793 probably proved as troublesome to the guardians of law and order as the bigger, brighter and livelier cosmopolitan city of today. Twice in the month of November did the Commissioners of Police and the Police Superintendent bring their troubles to the notice of the Governor-General and his Council and although they may appear trivial to their present-day confreres, they were not deemed unworthy of the consideration of the highest authorities in the land. If automobiles were still in the regions of dream land there were run-away horses and mares, stray *tattoos* and bulls to menace the peace and person of the plebian pedestrian and the aristocratic cavalier who wanted to refresh their jaded limbs in the open spaces of the esplanade. If the anarchist still awaited the natural process of biological evolution, the Ghat Serangs and Punch House-Keepers were petty tyrants who interfered with the liberty of dark-skinned laskars and fair-haired sailors alike. Above all there was the vile institution of slavery, which the policeman would fain suppress but the hard-hearted judges and the courts of law stood in his way and curbed his philanthropic zeal. The eternal conflict between the interpreter and the administrator of law was not moderated by mutual respect. But let the policemen place their case before the reader.

The Commissioners of Police, for there were no less than five in that happy year, thus impeached the unhappy horses

and mares, *tattoos* and bulls before the highest tribunal of the day :

To

SIR JOHN SHORE BART.,

Governor-General in Council &ca, &ca,

SIR,

A late unhappy accident having proved the Danger arising to Passengers from the present Practice of the Sices leading Horses for Exercise on the high Roads in the Neighbourhood of Calcutta We have thought it our Duty to do all that in us lies towards the Prevention of such Practice in future, to that End we now presume to address the Board humbly requesting their assistance to carry into Effect such Regulations, as appear to us likely to remedy the Evil.

1st. We wish to have the Permission of Government notified to the Public, That all Horses, Mares &ca. led abroad by Sices for Exercise may have free Ingress and Egress to the Northeast Quarter of the Esplanade enclosed with Paling, so that in case of any Horse breaking loose from the Sice no Injury can happen to Passengers on Horseback, in Carriages or on Foot on the high Roads, and if this were Signified to be the Desire of Government it is presumed all Persons would give Strict Orders to their Servants to comply with it.

2ndly. That the Board would be pleased to direct Three Gates for admission to the said Inclosure, one at the North-west Corner, another at the North-East Corner, and the Third at the South-East Corner opposite to the Riding House, where the Number of Horses daily resorting and led about is become a real and dangerous nuisance.

3rdly. That whereas equal Danger to Passengers on Horseback arises from the number of Tattoos and other Horses or Bulls suffered to run loose on the Esplanade and the adjacent Roads, we therefore Humbly suggest to the Board, as the most effectual Remedy The Erection of one or more Pounds in some conspicuous Place within the said

Inclosure, in which all Stray Horses and Bulls may be impounded by the Chokedars entrusted with the care of the Esplanade by order of the Chief Engineer, and by the Officers of the Police in Charge to prevent Nuisances in the Streets of Calcutta, and there to be Kept by a Pound Keeper to be appointed for the space of Six Days, if not Sooner claimed and paid for at the Rate of Two annas per day, after that Time to be sold to defray the Charge of feeding and for the Benefit of the Pound Keeper.

4. That as it would be dangerous, that Mares should run loose in the said Inclosure the same be Strictly prohibited, and that if any such should be found loose therein they be pounded and sold after Six Days, as abovementioned respecting Tattoos.

It may be proper to inform the Board that the Chief Engineer having been spoken to on the Subject has been pleased to say, That if the measure should be approved by the Board it shall meet with every assistance in his Power.

We are &ca
Sd. C. W. BLUND
,, JNO. BLYTH
,, ROBT. WILSON
,, J. ADDISON
,, J. B. SMITH
Commissioners of Police

COMMISSIONERS OF
POLICE OFFICE,
November 5th, 1793.

The Governor-General-in-Council approved the suggestion and authorised the publication of the regulation recommended by the Commissioners.

II

The Ghat Serangs defrauded the laskars as well as the masters of the sailing vessels that visited the harbour of

Calcutta and the trade union leaders of today should note how the wage-earners of 1793 were exploited and cheated by the unscrupulous men who posed as the best guardians of their interests. The guile of the Punch House-Keeper found an easy prey in the unsuspecting white sailor. But the human miscreants had a less formidable opponent than the offensive horses and bulls ; while the Commissioners of Police were resolved to suppress the latter only the Superintendent of Police found fault with the former. But, he wielded his pen with equal ease as his baton, and if he failed to carry all his points it was not for lack of logic or persuasive phrases. James Miller, the Superintendent of Police, exposed the inequities of the Ghat Serangs, Punch Shop-Keepers, Slave owners and sitting Judges in the letter quoted below :

To

THE HON'BLE SIR JOHN SHORE BART.,

Governor-General in Council.

HON'BLE SIR,

Having for a Considerable time past observed many Circumstances of difficulty to arise in transacting that part of the Business of Police which relates to the Conduct of the Ghaut Serangs towards Owners and Commanders of Ships, and the Lascars they provide ; and in matters pertaining to Slavery ; I humbly beg leave to submit the following facts and observations on each of those subjects, and to solicit my being honored with such directions as may be best Calculated for remedying the great abuses which exist under the first mentioned article and for Obviating the Doubts which often arise as to the right decision after an investigation of different Cases under the last.

2. The owners and Commanders of ships are subject to many and very severe grievances in obtaining even the smallest number of Lascars with which those Ships can be navigated.

3. The Ghaut Serangs who follow the business of providing Lascars seldom supply one third of the Crew who are really Lascars, or have even been a Voyage to Sea. The Owners &ca. are obliged to Advance four months pay however short the Voyage. But on the Ships return, it seems to be the generally adopted Idea amongst the Lascars and the Serangs who provide them, that they have served for the Wages received, and by many fradulent Machinations in Collusion with each other, frequently effect their joint purpose of Cheating the Captains.

4. The detention of a Ship for want of the people who have been impressed and have still time to serve, or from the absence of those who though duly impressed have never been on board, is attended with inappreciable Injury and loss to her Owners. They might indeed have recourse to the Supreme Court, and there procure an effective decree in their favor, but this would certainly come too late to answer the purposes of substantial Justice ; because under all the Grievances they are obliged to suffer, the Captains of Ships must go to Sea as soon and upon such terms as they can get an imperfect Crew to carry them out. Hence from their inability of attending the unavoidable tedious process of the Supreme Court, their Cause would in all likelyhood be lost ; but if perchance it should be established, the Complainant would then have nothing to Console him but the Satisfaction of having gained his Cause without having acquired any pecuniary Compensation ; for, even in that Case, the Charges he would be obliged to pay over and above the Costs that might be allowed him by the Court, would very probably be found to exceed the amount sued for.

5. It is not however the Captains and Owners of Ships alone who suffer from the rapacity and villainy of Ghaut Serangs. The Lascars, and those they obtrude upon the Captain as such, are often treated by those Serangs with great Cruelty and injustice. They are confined and afterwards sent by force on board a Ship, and seldom receive a

half of the Impress which is paid for them by the Captains; and some times even much less.

6. The people who are security for those Lascars are treated with no less Cruelty—they are seized and confined by the Ghaut Serangs, and obliged to make good the whole Impress of a Lascar who has run, and sometimes of a Lascar who had only been reported to have run, though afterwards it appeared he had gone the Voyage. And by this means they are compelled to pay much more than the Lascar had ever received.

7. I likewise beg leave to represent that great abuses and impositions take place in regard to the hiring of European Seamen.

8. The Evils of this kind, if they do not solely arise from that cause are greatly increased by the excessive number of Punch Houses kept by Europeans.

9. These Punch House Keepers are generally and frequently guilty of enticing away Seamen from Ships which they already belong to, and of inducing them to enter and receive impress for another Ship; the greatest part of which then or in the end will be found to vest in the Punch House Keeper.

10. It has even sometimes happened that this fraud has been practised two or three times even in the Course of one or two months by those Punch House Keepers, with a Single Seaman, without his having gone once to Sea on any of the Ships for which Impress had been received for him.

11. Every exertion has been made in the Police to mitigate the Evils above Stated; but further Regulation and more efficient authority seem equally essential for effecting Compleat remedy.

12. In regard to the article of Slavery, I beg leave to observe, that I have long understood from the Gentlemen Deputies on my taking Charge of the Office of Police, that the late Superintendent had intimated to them that it was the pleasure of Government that all Slaves, both male and female, who were come to years to be able to subsist them-

selves, on application for their liberty should be set free; to this Rule therefore the late Superintendent and his Deputies adhered; and the decisions which have been made since his death in case of such application, have been generally governed by the same authority and principle.

13. I understand however that the Judges hold a different Conduct in this respect, and seldom declare a Slave free, unless there be proofs of very severe ill treatment; and I learn that a Slave who was sometime ago declared free in the Cutcherry of Police was restored to her Mistress by Order of the Sitting Judge.

14. I could (*sic.*) therefore Hon'ble Sir request to be favored with Instructions, whether Slaves who apply for liberty are indiscriminately to be set free, or only those who exhibit marks or proofs of ill usage and severe treatment.

I am,
With high Respect,
Hon'ble Sir,
Your most obdient Humble Servant,
Sd. JAS. MILLER,
Supt.

POLICE OFFICE.
The 18th November, 1793.

III

The Governor-General-in-Council refused to take immediate action against the Serangs, as a Commitee was then investigating their alleged misconduct; it was expected that fresh Regulations about to be framed for regulating the sale of spirituous liquors would prevent in future the evil practices of the Punch House-Keepers. The natural enemy of the Police, the pigheaded Judges, stood vindicated, for the resolution on that part of the Superintendent's complaints runs as follows: "Relative to the 12th, 13th and 14th Paragraphs of his Letter the Superintendent of the Police is to be informed that the Regulations, which are in force relative to

Slavery, extend only to a Prohibition against exporting Persons and Slaves, and the consequences arising from that Act, and that all Applications, that may be made to him for liberating Slaves ought to be referred, with the Parties, to the sitting Magistrate."

The Punch House is today a thing of the past, the Ghat Serang is no longer a purveyor of human labour, the horses and mares have apparently improved their manners and no more constitute a public nuisance. Slavery has been banished from the land for good but the bull still roams in the streets of Calcutta free and unrestrained. But why bother? Has not Aldous Huxley given him a good character? Long live the bull, the vehicle of Shiva the Destroyer, the emblem of the unchanging east! Peace be upon him! May his race endure!

The Cannanore Incident, 1783-84

The Cannanore incident formed but an unimportant episode in the second Mysore War. The war was drawing to its close and peace pourparlers had already set in when Brigadier Norman MacLeod took the fortress of Cannanore by assault, captured Junumma Bi, Valiya Tangal, head of the ruling family, and dictated to her a treaty which was subsequently disavowed by the Government of Bombay. It did not materially affect the peace negotiations, nor did it in any way create a diversion for the enemy but it incidentally raised a few questions which were not altogether without political or constitutional significance.

It is not proposed to go into the origin of the Cannanore family. It is immaterial for our purposes whether the founder of the house was a Nayar convert or a Mapilla or Moplah of Indo-Arabic descent. Suffice it to say that the "Ali Rajas" or the sea kings of Cannanore were originally in the service of the Kolattiri Raja. They gradually improved their position and ultimately asserted their independence but had to revise their ambitious policy when Haidar rose to power. The suzerainty of the feeble Kolattiri prince could be renounced with impunity but the growing power of Haidar could neither be defied nor ignored and the ruling Ali Raja deemed it prudent to accept the office of the High Admiral while his brother became "Intendant of the marine, of the ports and of the maritime commerce of Hyder Ali's dominions." It is needless to add that the Ali Raja of the day was not on the best of terms with his English neighbours of Tellicherry. The subordinate alliance into which he entered with Haidar proved of mutual advantage to the contracting parties. Haidar stood in need of a strong fighting fleet and the armed vessels of the Cannanore Chief provided a convenient nucleus for the projected navy. Assured of the support of Haidar the new High Admiral

sought fresh fields of adventure across the sea and conquered and annexed the Maldives despite the disapproval of the Tellicherry factors. In 1776 Janumma Bi, better known as the Ali Raja Bibi or the Queen of Cannanore, succeeded to the fortunes of the family. She was not the first or the last lady to rule Cannanore. It would be surprising indeed if the rights of a woman to succeed to her ancestral state could be altogether denied on the strength of the Islamic laws in a country where the matriarchal order still held its own. That the Bibi should closely identify herself with the Mysorean cause like her immediate predecessor need not cause any surprise. Common faith furnished a bond which community of interest served to strengthen and the Bibi became a firm adherent of the Tiger of Seringapatam. The rest of the story may best be related in the words of General MacLeod.

MacLeod had waged the war without any reference to his immediate and ultimate superiors and had concluded a definitive treaty without their previous sanction. It was therefore necessary to explain under what provocations he was impelled to commit an aggression calculated to prejudice the peace talks then in progress. In a letter addressed to Lord Macartney on the 6th January, 1784, he gave the following account of the capture of Cannanore and its queen :

"For the beginning of November last, the storm which destroyed the *Superb* proved fatal to three hundred men who were coming from the northward to join me at Tellicherry, two hundred of them were driven on shore near Mangalore, and notwithstanding the Cessation of arms, immediately made prisoners by Tippoo, I demanded, but in vain their restitution.

"One hundred of these men were wrecked at this place, where the Queen immediately put them in irons, I demanded them, and was refused, I repeated my demands several times, and was answered by defiances, although the great interests of the Hon'ble Company might suspend their exertion

against the principal foe, I saw no reason why she should submit to injuries and affronts from every little Tyrant on the Coast, I therefore prepared to march to this place, but not commence hostilities, if I could obtain restitution of my soldiers otherwise, tho' fired at from many forts and parties, we did not return it, till we arrived before the principal fortress, I then once more sent a flag of Truce, which had no more effect than the former, on which I breach'd the fort and stormed it, still there was no submission I was forced to attack their lines, which we were soon in a condition to master.

"At last my object was attained, we found in the prisons, my hundred men, fettered, stripped and nearly starved.

"The Queen now sued for mercy, which was given to her and her subjects in the most ample manner. I mention for the honour of the troops, that the inhabitants have not brought a single complaint, of a man being hurt, or a woman insulted"[1].

An earlier account of the incident had of course been transmitted to Bombay. MacLeod naturally felt proud of his achievement. The campaign was brief, the casualty small and the result, according to his way of thinking, extremely satisfactory. The campaign lasted only six days from the 9th to the 14th December 1783, but the actual fighting appears to have taken place on the 13th and the 14th alone with a total casualty of 279 men and officers, 70 of whom were killed, 201 wounded and 8 missing.

We need not reproduce here the text of the *Kaul* or agreement into which MacLeod had, without any valid authority, entered with the captive Bibi, as it has been printed *in extenso* by Logan.[2] The General was anxious to retain Cannanore for ever and pressed the advantages of his pro-

1 Secret Consultation, 13th May 1784, No. D.

2 W. Logan, *A collection of Treaties, Engagements, and other papers of importance relating to British affairs in Malabar*, page 81.

posal on the President and Council of Bombay in a letter, dated the 29th December 1783.[1]

"There can be no doubt that the reduction of Cannanore is highly conducive to the interest of the Hon'ble Company, it has long been inconvenient to Tellichery, it is one of the first fortresses in India and a fine pepper Settlement. If it is kept, the Queen will pay three Lacks per annum and the Company will have the purchase of the pepper, if it is given up, I have taken care to make it an easy conquest again, by the demolition of their Lines."

To Lord Macartney and the Madras Council he wrote: "This is the strongest fort I have seen in India excepting our own Capitals, it is much more valuable to us than Mangalore, because no enemy can stop between it and the Sea, I have agreed with the Queen that she shall pay an annual tribute to the Company, and give them the first offer annually of their pepper, now I must further acquaint you, my Lord and Gentlemen, that Tippoo claims this place as one of his dependencies".[2] MacLeod laid particular stress on the prospects of the pepper trade, as business at Tellicherry was dull and the future of the factory was hanging in the balance.

The General expected that his conquest would be permanently retained despite Tipu's claims, for he was under the impression that the Mysore prince was on the brink of ruin and could not continue the fight on equal terms for any length of time without a grave risk to his power. He informed Warren Hastings:

"Tippoo is now in that situation, which would make a continuance of the War utter ruin to him. His finances are exhausted, his army is discontented, his Chiefs and men dissatisfied, his subjects rebellious. We never were so strong in Troops, nor so disengaged from Enemies, the Marattas press him, a single Defeat would melt his army like a Snow Ball".[3]

1 Secret Consultation, 13th May 1784, No. B.

2 Secret Consultation, 13th May 1784, No. 1.

3 Secret Consultation, 9th March 1784.

Although MacLeod was fully aware that "the affairs of the Company call loudly for Peace", he was definitely of opinion that the agents of the Madras Government were not likely to secure the most advantageous terms, and did not hesitate to communicate his views to the Governor-General.

The political activities of General MacLeod could not but be a source of anxiety and embarrassments to the Government of Bombay and they hastened to tell him as politely and as plainly as possible that in entering into a treaty with the Ali Raja Bibi the General had not only exceeded the bounds of his authority but outstepped the limits of his discretion as well. We read in a letter, dated the 12th January 1784:

"While we thus with great pleasure do justice to the army and at the same time embrace this opportunity of certifying the Higher opinion of the abilities of their gallant Commander in Chief, we cannot help being concerned at the precipitancy of your Political measures in attempting to make any Treaty whatever with your Captive Queen without having first had a reference to us for our consent and instructions. It is with astonishment we observe from your Orders to Colonel Gordon of the 23rd Ultimo that you look upon this agreement to be full and complete; and with equal surprise on a perusal of the copy of the Cowll transmitted with your late Dispatches, we find, no reservation for our Ratification or that of the Supreme Council, although it grants a protection which in the sense it bears in a public Treaty with an inferior Country Power even this Government have not authority to finally promise or contract for without the approbation of the Governor General and Council.

"Although it is very probable when we shall have time and leisure to come to some certain determination regarding this new Conquest, that our own ideas respecting the restoration of the Bibby may perhaps coincide with your sentiments. We think it necessary, and have unanimously resolved to disavow and annul the compact or agreement en-

tered into with the Bibby of Cannanore by you, without any authority in the first instance, to make either. War or Peace in behalf of the Hon'ble Company. We shall in due time give to the Commissioners appointed to treat with Tippoo Saib, our full instructions respecting the future disposal of the person of the Bibby, her Forts and her Country; in the meantime we approve of the Orders left by you with Colonel Gordon expressed in the 3rd Paragraph as to her safety and the preservation of her Dominions.

"It is with pain we find ourselves under an unavoidable necessity of thus disavowing any act of moment of our Commander in Chief on the Coast and more especially any act of General MacLeod's of whose zeal and abilities we have had such unequivocal testimonies and notwithstanding we are firmly and invariably resolved not to admit any General of our Armies to act as you have done on this occasion more particularly when there does not appear to us to have been even the smallest political necessity for such a Precipitancy of measures, to convince you of our sincere wish to show you every mark of attention within the limits of our Duty. We have determined not to make their disavowal publick until after your now expected arrival on this island and we have heard what you may have further to u[illegible] us on this subject."[1]

Anxious as the Government of Bombay was not to discredit MacLeod in the public eye the open disavowal was not long in coming as we learn from a letter addressed six days later to Alexander Callander and Edward Ravenscroft:

"Since we begun these instructions, we have received Dispatches from General Macleod of the 28th and 29th Ultimo and to our astonishment, find, that he has taken upon him to make a Treaty of agreement with the Bibby of Cannanore in behalf of the Hon'ble Company. On full consideration, we have on the 12th instant in Committee disavowed and annulled this compact, copy of the Cowll

1 Secret Consultation, 9th March 1784, No. 9.

is enclosed for your notice. If Tippoo Saib had not claimed the Bibby as his Ally, or if he would still give her up, we make no doubt that she would renew the Treaty made with the General, and perhaps enter into still more advantageous terms for the Company to be again restored to her Dominions. However as we suppose from the tenor of his late letter that the Nabob will obstinately maintain his claim respecting Cannanore and as we are determined not to retard the great work of Peace on account of this new Conquest from the keeping of which we can see no real advantage can accrue to the Hon'ble Company we empower you to agree to restore the Bibby of Cannanore to her country and Forts in the State and condition in which they may be then found on the same Day that you issue the order for the Surrender of Mangalore".[1]

The surmise of the Bombay Government proved correct. Tipu not only claimed the Bibi of Cannanore but many other princes of the Malabar coast as his subjects and she was specifically included in the first Article of the treaty of Mangalore while the fourth Article laid down the conditions under which Cannanore was to be restored to the queen.

"As soon as all the prisoners are released and delivered, the fort and district of Cannanore shall be evacuated and restored to Ali Rajah Biby, the Queen of that country, in the presence of any one person without troops, whom the Nawab Tippoo Sultan Bahadoor may appoint for that purpose; and at the same time that the orders are given for the evacuation and delivery of the forts of Cannanore and Dindigul, the said Nawab shall give written orders for the evacuation and delivery of Amboorgur and Satgur to the English; and in the meantime none of the troops of the said Nawab shall be left in any Part of the Carnatic except in the two forts above mentioned."[2]

MacLeod held that the capture of Cannanore did not cons-

1 Secret Consultation, 13th May 1784, No. E.

2 Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*. Vol. IX, P. 230 (5th Edition).

titute a breach of the armistice as Tipu had already renewed hostilities by attacking Sadashivgad. At any rate Colonel Fullarton had given the Mysore ruler greater provocation. But he certainly ignored the specific terms laid down by the fourth article of the treaty of Mangalore when he evacuated Cannanore and embarked his troops early in April without formally delivering the fort to an accredited agent of Tipu who naturally complained of bad faith. The General on this occasion had the full support of the Bombay Government who had to "break up their army" and withdraw them from Malabar for lack of funds. They further asserted that Tipu could not have any reason to complain as "In our President's congratulatory Letter to Tippoo Saib on the Peace, wherein our firm intentions of preserving it inviolate are explicitly declared, our pointed instructions to our chief and Factors at Tillicherry not on any pretence to intermeddle between the Nabob and the Malabar Princes so expressly included in the treaty as his allies, or to afford them or their Families public protection within the Company's limits, and above all in removing the Army from the Coast, the Nabob must have the most convincing proofs of the sincerity of the intentions of this Government, and that we were resolved not to give him the shadow of a plea for any infraction of the treaty on his part, while we kept up to the spirit of it on ours."[1] To the Governor-General they vindicated themselves as well as their general in the following manner:

"In a letter from Mr. Secretary Huddleston of the 16th Ulto we are given to understand that the evacuation of Cannanore without a Person being present deputed from the Nabob may be deemed by him a violation of the treaty and that the surrendering that country may be weakening the Securities the Company were possessed of to compel a due execution on the part of the Nabob.

"In reply we have acquainted the Right Hon'ble the President and Select Committee at Fort St. George that the

1 Secret Consultation, 27th July 1784, No. 21.

same unavoidable necessity, which compelled the breaking up of the army under General MacLeod forced us to evacuate Cannanore without the army being kept in force that Country could not have been maintained, the first being impossible to us, in our circumstances, the last was equally beyond our force necessity the most urgent had obliged us to relinquish it even at the hazard of weakening in some small degree the securities of the due performance of the Treaty.

"We have also urged that in our opinion this the strongest of all pleas must even vindicate our Conduct in this particular whatever may be the consequences resulting thereupon. We trust the Nabob himself will not complain of our having done too much notwithstanding a Person from him was not present which could have only been intended to have convinced him that his ally the Bibi was completely restored to Independence and of this the Nabob has had the fullest proof, in the withdrawing of our Troops from her Forts and Country.

"Tippoo Sultan seems himself to be hitherto fully satisfied as far as we can judge from his answer to our President's congratulatory Letter dated since the evacuation of Cannanore."[1]

But the Sultan certainly did not take such a favourable view of the hasty evacuation of Cannanore. As Tipu wrote to the Chief of Tellicherry, the Cannanore fort had been made "empty as a Jungle, and then your troops went away. By this it is certain that the heart is not clean. What more is to write!"

It was really a change of heart that was urgently called for. But for mutual suspicion and distrust the Cannanore incident might not have taken place at all after the armistice had been actually concluded. Tipu was reluctant to let the English provision Mangalore by sea and the English were anxious to retain that place, until all their countrymen had

1 Secret Consultation, 27th July 1784, No. 19.

been released by the Sultan. General MacLeod would not have demolished any part of the Cannanore fort if he had not apprehended future hostilities with Mysore. But one point strikes us above everything else as we grope through contemporary records. Bombay was by 1783 completely reconciled to the subordinate position assigned to her by the Regulating Act. During the first Maratha war the Bombay authorities had more than once challenged, in deed if not in words, the newly constituted Supreme Government's right to interfere with their foreign policy and had treated all such intervention with ill-concealed dislike, but in 1784 the Governor and Council told General MacLeod that they were not competent to commit the Company to peace or war and that power rested with the Governor-General and the Supreme Council. Whether MacLeod was justified in fighting the Bibi, whether the Bibi was right in detaining the shipwrecked soldiers, whether she was a Mysore subject in law and fact, are questions of purely academic interest to-day to which a simple and straight answer is not easy to find. Whatever may be the rights and the wrongs of the case it is characteristic of the times and it is on that account alone if not for any other reason that the Cannanore incident demands our notice and deserves a careful examination.

General Ventura's *Jahgir*

Of the four military adventurers who learnt their trade in Napoleon's army and earned their bread in Ranjit Singh's service not the least fortunate was General Jean Baptiste Ventura, Comte de Mandy. The estate left by his comrade in arms, the Frenchman Allard, was computed at the modest sum of twenty-five thousand rupees, while Ventura raised no less than eighty thousand by the sale of his horses, elephants, boats and miscellaneous belongings alone.[1] The Neapolitan Avitabile, more careful about his purse and future provision than Allard, had indeed closed his account with the East India Company's government at four lakhs and fifty thousand, but the *Jahgir* of Mademoiselle Ventura fetched in 1852 twenty-four thousand pounds or two lakhs and forty thousand rupees in Indian currency, a considerable fortune any day, more so a century ago.[2] The scholarly Court became a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of England and the learned societies of the Continent delighted to honour him, but it is doubtful whether he was financially so well provided as Avitabile and Ventura when he retired home with his second Kashmiri wife. His *Jahgirs* were certainly less lucrative than those held by Ventura in the life time of Ranjit Singh, to which considerable additions were made by the munificence of other princes.[3] The small estate of Court was eventually

[1] C. Grey, *European Adventurers of Northern India*, p. 115,

[2] According to Grey and Garrett, Ventura sold his daughter's *Jahgir* for £20,000. But the deed of sale, which was duly attested by the British Consulate at Paris, clearly states that the East India Company paid one thousand pounds in advance and twenty-three thousand pounds at the time of the execution of the deed. A life pension of £300 per annum was on this occasion granted to Ventura.

[3] We learn from Grey and Garrett that the Court's *Jahgir* brought him Rs. 650 per month while the total income from Ventura's *Jahgir* amounted to Rs. 800 per mensem. (*European Adventurers in Northern India*, pp., 104, 153.)

confiscated by the Sikh government after the assassination of Sher Singh, but Ventura successfully weathered all the political storms of those uncertain times and retained his lands even after the British annexation of the Punjab. Though a failure at the Bourse, and not uncommonly circumspect in his political correspondence, Ventura earned the good will of the Sikhs and the Britishers alike. How he steered clear of the Scylla of Sikh suspicion and the Charybdis of British disfavour still remains a mystery.

Ventura began his Indian career on a salary of Rs. 500 per mensem, which, according to Grey and Garrett, "had by the year 1826 increased to Rs. 3,000, and as from time to time *Jahgirs* bringing in a total income of about Rs. 800 per month were added to this, his income was quite considerable."[1] But Ranjit Singh was not always punctual in his payments and his officers were often left in arrears. Ventura, moreover, kept a harem even after his marriage in 1825, and when his wife left him, a suitable allowance had to be granted.[2] His savings, therefore, might not have been as considerable as his nominal income. But when he retired from the Sikh service, he was quite well off, if not actually opulent.

In 1837 he went to Paris on leave with his only daughter, Claudine Victorine, but the news of his master's illness soon brought him back to India. The political unrest in the Punjab convinced him of the early need of winding up his affairs, but it was not until 1843 that he finally made up

[1] C. Grey, ed. Garrett, *European Adventurers in Northern India*, p. 104. The figure given by Grey and Garrett is of doubtful accuracy. Mackeson wrote to Inglis (Letter No. 52 of 1848) on the 20th March, 1848, that Ventura's salary never exceeded Rs. 30,000 per annum.

[2] Grey says that "In 1825 Ventura was married at Ludhiana to an Armenian lady of mixed descent." (*European Adventurers*, p. 104). Latif, however, asserts that the lady was a European. "The nuptials took place at Lahore according to the French form, the Maharaja presenting the bridegroom with ten thousand, and his courtiers and Omerahs with thirty thousand rupees, as tambol." (*History of the Panjab*, p. 433.) According to Mackeson, Ventura's wife was an Armenian.

his mind, sold all his effects except the Ludhiana house,[1] where his Armenian wife still lived, and his daughter's *Jahgir*,[2] and left for British India to sail for Europe in November of the next year. How he succeeded in inducing the East India Company's Government[3] to look after the management of his estates we do not know, but the terms, if they were as good as those he obtained in 1850, were entirely to his advantage. It may be safely assumed that but for this arrangement his, or to be strictly accurate, his daughter Claudine's *Jahgir* might have been forfeited after the British annexation of the Punjab. Ventura seems to have carefully provided for all eventualities and that explains why the *Jahgir* was granted to the daughter for services rendered by the father.

It appears that the *Jahgirs* were granted at different times, as J. Inglis writes to Major Mackeson,[4] "You will observe that the whole of the villages, now comprising the Jagheer claimed by General Ventura, were not granted at the same time. The grant of the village Rajiwal in Loodianah having been made in 1893—that of Halwara etc. in Wadni in 1896. The grant of all seems to have been afterwards repeated in one deed and this deed is said to have been confirmed by Maharaja Shere Sing as the regent on behalf of Dulleep Sing." We get further details about the *Jahgir* in the deed of sale[5] executed by Claudine Victorine Ventura de Mandy and Jean Baptiste Comte Ventura de Mandy in favour of the East India Company on the 10th December, 1852. According to this deed, the *Jahgir*

[1] The Lahore residence was also retained by Ventura with all the furniture.

[2] Mackeson writes (Letter No. 63, dated 29th March, 1848) that in 1844 Ventura wished to sell this *Jahgir* to the Chief of Nabha but was prevented from doing so by the Governor-General's Agent.

[3] It should be noted that the Government had not formally undertaken to manage Ventura's estate which had been placed under the care of the Governor-General's Agent.

[4] Letter dated the 19th April, 1848 ; P.C., 25th January, 1850, No. 102.

[5] Copy forwarded with the Despatch No. 4 of 1853, dated the 2nd March, 1853 : P.C., 22nd April, 1853, Nos. 165-66.

consisted of the "villages and tracts of land called Talwundee, Halwara, Boorj Hurrie Sing, Boorj Sutan, Puttee Roopa and Rajiwal situated to the west of Loodiana District in the Province of Lahore." Legal precision probably demanded the inclusion of "any other villages or tracts of land in Lahore aforesaid." It is also possible that Jean Baptiste had no precise knowledge of the villages held by him and his daughter in *Jahgir*, and his minor daughter could not be expected to be better informed than her father.[1]

When was this *Jahgir*, which Claudine Victorine Ventura de Mandy claimed to hold in perpetuity, originally granted to her? According to the document cited above, the *Jahgir* was granted to Ventura's daughter by "Maharajah Runjeet Singh in about the year one thousand eight hundred thirty four and confirmed and recognised by him and his successors Maharajahs of Lahore." If this assertion is correct, General Ventura must be credited with uncommon political foresight. Full five years before Runjeet Singh's death he had obtained a formal grant from the Maharaja that would, under normal conditions, secure the *Jahgir* for his daughter at least for her life time, if not in perpetuity. But in the absence of the original records it is not safe to accept the statement at its face value, for we learn from the deed of sale that "the said Jean Baptiste Comte Ventura de Mandy claims to be entitled to some interest in the said Jagheer and the past revenues thereof," though it is not anywhere stated that the grant was made jointly to the father and the daughter.[2] It is also to be noted that Claudine

[1] Campbell in his report on Ventura's *Jahgir* mentions six villages.

[2] In a letter dated the 18th March, 1848, Ventura gives the following account of the grant and its nature :

"In 1833 Maharaja Runjeet Singh honoured me with a visit at my house in Annarkullee, and on my introducing my daughter Victorine, then two years old, to him he gave her certain villages in the Joudpore country. In 1840 in accordance with a request made to me by Colonel Wade P. A. of Loodianah these villages were exchanged for those which are now in my daughter's possession.

Victorine was a minor of 20 years in 1850 when, by a deed executed at Paris,[1] she conferred upon her father "a power of Attorney fully authorising him to act on her behalf in the matter of the Jageer." The *Jahgir* was, therefore, granted when she was a child of four, if the testimony of the deed of sale is to be accepted.

General Ventura returned to India once again in 1848 while the second Sikh war was still in progress. The old adventurer offered to fight the state he once served but some indiscretions at London had made him a suspect in the British eyes and his services were politely declined.[2] He stayed on in India, and it appears that he wanted to assume the direct administration of the *Jahgirs* which were then

"The terms of the Purwanah were drawn out in due form and the grant was accorded from generation to generation. This right has been acknowledged by all the chiefs that have since succeeded in the Punjab.

"This gift was made on one condition which was accepted by me, that for the future I should not demand any increase of emolument ; thus in fact the grant has been paid for by my having given up the emoluments which I ought to have received with my superior appointments ; there is no doubt that having been raised from rank to rank till I have attained that of General, I might be receiving double the emolument with which I have remained content, because of the condition just mentioned.

"Every body knows that the Maharajah made this gift to my daughter on the left bank of the Sutledge surrounded by the possessions of the Company in order that it might be assured to her after his death under the protection of the Hon'ble Company's Government and that he might not be benefited to take possession of it himself again he permitted me to place it in the hands of the representatives of the English Government which you know I have always done since Mr. Clerk resided at Umballa till the present date.

"As to Mr. Campbell's observation that it is I who want to draw the revenue of the villages and not my daughter, I beg you to remark that my daughter being a minor, it is my duty to watch over her interests, so that this observation is not sufficient to prove that the *Jahgir* was given more to me than to my daughter."

[1] Political Despatch to Court, 15th September, 1850, No. 33. The deed is dated 1850. Mademoiselle Ventura described as a resident of Rue du Faubourg St. Honore No. 68 (old No. 64). It is stated in this document that she was born on the 22nd of April, 1830.

[2] Grey, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

under attachment.[1] The Company's Government could not comply with his request for reasons explained in Mr. Inglis's letter to Major Mackeson.[2] In para 9 of that letter we read, "As General Ventura is an European foreigner and has never been in the occupancy and management of the Jagheer and as he is moreover only the temporary guardian of the grantee until her marriage or coming of age the Chief Commisioner does not think that it should be expedient to make over to him the management of the villages." There were other legal and administrative difficulties which demanded serious consideration. Although there was no doubt about the grant, the name of the grantee herself could not be found in any of the papers preserved in the Sikh archives. There remained the important question to be decided whether the grant was to terminate with the life of the grantee. "The terms of all the Sunnuds of the Punjab Government are the same and in words imply perpetual duration—by universal practice a grant lapsed on the death of either the grantor or the grantee". In this case some of the grantors were already dead and the Chief Commissioner was prepared to confirm the *Jahgir* to the grantee "for her life open to the consideration of the Government of the day, on the occasion of her death, whether the produce of the villages or any portion thereof shall be continued in the next generation." Lastly, the Government deemed it incumbent upon them to safeguard the interests of other parties. "It is expressly stated that the interests of the Rajpoots in the portion of Halwara and Tulwundy in their possession were reserved to them and excluded in terms for the grant of

[1] After the first Sikh war all the territories on the left bank of the Sutlej, together with the Jallundar Doab, were ceded to the East India Company, and it was decided to sequestrate all the *Jahgirs* and *Maafi* lands in the ceded Districts pending an enquiry into the rights of the holders. They were, however, permitted to administer the sequestrated *Jahgirs* on furnishing a security. As Ventura's *Jahgir* was in reality under British management, it should not have been sequestrated, and Ventura's prayer was not of an unusual nature.

[2] Dated the 19th April, 1848.

General Ventura's daughter." Further, there seems to have been some doubt "whether the right of the said Claudine Victorine Ventura de Mandy did not upon such conquest become void" as "the said country of Lahore afterwards became by conquest annexed to and now forms part of the British Dominions in the East Indies."[1] General Ventura was, therefore, called upon to produce a "copy of the deed of 10th Cheyt, 1896 and the confirming deeds of the succeeding Sovereigns" and "to put on record the name and date of birth of the young lady in whose favour the grant was made." The General categorically declined to "furnish information called for in regard to his Jagheer in the letter of the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner No. 102, dated 19th April, 1848, on the ground that a partial compliance with the provisions would be an acquiescence in the justice of orders against which he has appealed to the Court of Directors."[2] The Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana enquired "whether or not payment is to be made to the General of the Revenue for his Jaghir." But the Commissioner and Superintendent, Cis-Sutlej States, decided that "There is no necessity to deprive General Ventura of the Proceeds of his Jagheer" and this decision was approved by the Government of India[3] despite the objections of the Board of Administration. Evidently, the Italian adventurer had influential friends who pleaded his cause with success.

In 1850 the negotiations made satisfactory progress and General Ventura "obtained from his daughter a power of attorney fully authorising him to act on her behalf in the matter of the Jageer."[4] It was finally settled that the General would receive the sum of £1,000 per annum in

[1] This occurs in the deed of sale.

[2] Lt.-Col. F. Mackeson, C.B., Commissioner and Superintendent, Cis-Sutlej States, to P. Melvill, Esq., Offg. Secretary to the Board, Lahore, dated 8th November, 1849 : P. C., 25th January, 1850, Nos. 24-25.

[3] Sir Henry Elliot's letter to the Board of Administration for the Affairs of the Punjab, dated the 16th January, 1850.

[4] Political Despatch to Court, 15th September, 1850, No. 33.

lieu of the revenue of the *Jahgir*[1] and the settlement was to take effect from the 1st May, 1850. According to Sir Henry Elliot, the *Jahgir* was calculated to yield Rs. 10,000 per annum,[2] and as the exchange rate was two shillings to the Rupee, General Ventura struck an excellent bargain, which secured him and his daughter the entire revenue of their *Jahgir*. In a Despatch,[3] dated the 22nd August, 1851, we read that the Ventura estates were assessed at Rs. 9,334, but it was recommended that General Ventura should be paid "£1,000 per annum notwithstanding that the Jageer does not yield quite so much."

Not content with the very profitable settlement that he had made, General Ventura tried to get something more than the first year's annuity, on the plea that "the revenue of his Jageer for the first six months of the year is not collected till May and June and consequently, although he had been paid in India the whole amount which had actually reached the Deputy Commissioner's Treasury up to the 30th April, 1850, he had in fact received nothing on account of the rents which accrued for the months of January, February, March and April, and he solicited that in lieu thereof a payment might be made to him on that account of a sum equivalent to four-twelfths of his annuity or in other words, that his annuity might be held to commence with the beginning of the Civil, instead of the official

1 Political Despatch to Court, 25th November, 1850, No. 44. According to W. H. Larkins, Deputy Commissioner of Ludhiana, the former assessments of the Ventura estates were as follows : Sumbut 1900 at Rs. 7,858, Sumbut 1901 at Rs. 7,675, Sumbut 1902 at Rs. 8,835 (Letter to Mackeson, No. 78, dated 5th April, 1848). In 1849 the *Jahgir* was summarily assessed by Larkins at Rs. 13,499-10-8¾ (Letter No. 39, dated 11th March, 1849). The terms granted to Ventura in 1850 were, therefore, unusually liberal. But as he wrote to Mackeson, Ventura relied more on the "generosity and consideration of the British Government" than on the *sanads* he received from his Sikh masters.

2 Political Despatch to Court, dated 16th May, 1851, No. 30.

3 Political Despatch, No. 57 of 1851.

year."[1] The General had indeed received an advance of Rs. 4,000, on condition that this sum should be deducted from his allowance on the 1st May when it fell due. The Directors argued that "If this payment was intended as an equivalent for the revenue accruing to the General from his Jageer for the first four months of the year, although not receivable in the local treasury till after the 1st May, it appears that no deduction should be made on that account from the annuity payable in this Country." They, however, thought that an overpayment had been made, as four-twelfths of £1,000 would amount to £333-6-8 and not Rs. 4,000 or £400.[2] To this the Government of India replied, through Sir Henry Elliot, "The reason why Rs. 4,000 was remitted to General Ventura was not because any rents were then due to him, but because he represented that he had borrowed money to enable him to procure a passage to England and the reason why Rs. 4,000 was remitted rather than any other sum was that it represented the amount which would have been shortly due for the spring harvest—as his Jageer was represented to yield the proportion of two-fifths in the Spring harvest, and three-fifths in the autumn harvest—which, as the Jageer is calculated to yield Rs. 10,000 per annum, is 4,000 for the former and 6,000 for the latter."[3] Sir Henry Elliot, however, concluded his despatch with the following observations :

"If your Hon'ble Court are so far inclined to concede the indulgence to General Ventura of paying him by the Civil instead of the official year, from January to December instead of from May to April, I have not the least objection to offer, as I am most anxious that he should be treated with all kindness and consideration—but I would merely beg to remind you that, in doing so, you would, every year,

1 Political Despatch to Court, dated 16th May, 1851, No. 30. Also see Revenue Despatch from Court, No. 4 of 1851.

2 Para. 4 of Revenue Despatch from Court, No. 4 of 1851.

3 Para. 5 of Political Despatch to Court, dated 16th May, 1851, No. 30.

be paying him four months in advance of any collection from his *Jageer*." So it is not unlikely that Ventura pocketed 4,000 Rupees more than the stipulated allowance, but the papers in the Imperial Record Department do not offer any definite information.

In December, 1852, Ventura and his daughter surrendered "all rights and interest claimed by them in the *Jageer* in the Punjab granted to the latter by the late Maharaja Ranjeet Sing[1] in consideration of a cash payment of £24,000 and a life pension of £300 per annum to General Ventura" and here we might take leave of the Comte de Mandy and the *Jahgir* but for two communications about the pension made in 1854 and 1855. The Despatch No. 27 of 1854, dated the 18th October, directed "That the Life pension of £300 per annum granted to General Ventura who is about to proceed to India be paid to him in Calcutta from the 30th September last," and the Despatch No. 42 of 1855 informed the Governor-General of India in Council that "General Ventura's annuity of Three Hundred Pounds (£300) will be issued from our Home Treasury from 31st December, 1854, the date of the last payment to him in India as certified by your Sub-Treasurer under date 6th February, 1855, No. 368." It is, therefore, evident that General Ventura's pension was paid for the last quarter of 1854 only at Calcutta. We cannot help wondering whether he came to India for the fourth time in 1854 or ultimately changed his mind and abandoned the projected visit. In any case, his stay in this country must have been remarkably brief, as no further payment seems to have been made here. Had he still some property in India to be disposed of ? What happened to his Behar estate ? His Armenian wife subsisted on a pension granted by the British Government, and Ventura would not travel all the way to India on her account. The last payment made to Ventura by the British Government in India, therefore, confronts us

1 Home Department (Revenue) Cons., 22nd April, 1853, No. 1.

with an unsolved mystery. Ventura was believed to have left a vast treasure in this country. It is pertinent to enquire whether the last journey or contemplated visit to India had anything to do with this legend.

Ventura breathed his last at Paris in the first week of April four years later (1858). We wish we knew more about a man who played so prominent a part in the Punjab of Ranjit Singh, but more light would mean less mystery and an intimate portrait of Ventura might not prove so colourful as the shrouded figure in the deep shades of a distant stage with a grim background of bloody strifes and dark designs.

Velu Tampi's Rebellion

Velu Tampi was the typical strong man of his times. When vested in his own person he had a salutary respect for authority. For weakness and incompetence he had nothing but contempt. A rebel by instinct, he knew how to work upon popular passions. His first revolt brought him to power but the second wrought his ruin. Yet his worst enemy could not attribute his discomfiture to lack of daring or enterprise. To yoke his willing confrere of Cochin was perhaps not so difficult but Velu Tampi tried and all but succeeded in rallying all the discontented elements under his own leadership and looked across the seas for an ally whose prowess had proved more than equal to that of the British in the battlefields of Europe. It was not his fault that the expected succour from the French islands never arrived. The story of his insurrection told so well by Wilson (*History of India*) and V. Nagam Aiya (*Travancore State Manual*) need not be repeated here but we may rescue frcm oblivion a narrative which Col. Daly left of what may rightly be described as Velu Tampi's last parleys with a Britsh officer. It shows the redoubtable Dewan at his best and worst. Col. Daly commanded the Carnatic Brigade, which stood so staunchly by the Dewan, and knew him well. The narrative[1] that follows was written for the information of Col. Macaulay, the Resident, and was transmitted by him to the Acting Chief Secretary of the Govt. of Fort St. George.

"You will recollect that your writer in Company with me left your House at Cochin on the 26th December about Eight O'Clock at night for Aleppi where we arrived next morning about the same hour, and immediately waited upon the Dewan to whom I delivered your letter. He

1 Sec. Cons., 10 April, 1809, No. 3.

appeared highly. pleased with the contents and instantly ordered Palpanapoolah his late Secretary to make out a letter of resignation for him which letter was to be delivered to the Colonel for the purpose of forwarding to the Rajah. Your writer requested a copy of this letter which he said was requisite for the satisfaction of the Colonel. I should have observed that on our way to the Cutchree, I desired your writer to inform the Dewan that it was the Colonel's order for me to return with him, which he did, but the Dewan hastily answered there was no necessity for that as he wished me to accompany himself. I was struck with the manner of his reply and instantly said that I had made the same observation to the Colonel at Cochin, and that he said It was very well, my reason for this was to do away any suspicion the Dewan may harbour we then enquired at what time he would be ready to depart, he answered the next Evening about Eight or Nine O'Clock so that the Colonel may expect him at Cochin Early the Morning following, at the same time he desired the writer to request of the Colonel to order two Palinquins one for himself and the other for me, I observed that two Palinquins would not be sufficient as his Brother Tomby would want one, he answered Tomby and Palpanapoolah must manage for themselves as well as they can. He then added that it would be proper for the Colonel to order four Guards with a Jemadar to await our arrival at Cranganore as it was possible his own people may do him injury on the way when they discovered his flight, all which the writer promised to mention to the Colonel we then took leave & ca on the Evening of the same day I waited on the Dewan and found him seated in greater state than usual surrounded by a number of the Head people such as Valia Sarwadies and Sarwadies, I observed the Pepper Sarwady Palpanapoolah was not present, the Dewan after some short time desired I would go home as he was then a little busy that there was no occasion for me to come next morning but to come in the Evening I was surprised at this, and desired my linguist

to speak in his ear (?) (many people being present) and Enquire what he meant by what he said just now as he knew very well the time was precious and Colonel Macaulay would be expecting him at Cochin agreeable to his promise. He answered that the day tomorrow was not a good day, but to come in the Evening and he would inform me the time to a certainty, accordingly the following Evening about seven O'Clock I waited on him when he soon dispatched me saying tomorrow Evening about nine O'Clock we shall take our departure take care to have your Boat &ca in readiness at that hour. Accordingly on the 29th in the Evening about seven O'Clock I waited on him having previously made ready my Boat imagining he would to a certainty set off the same night, on seeing me he inquired if I was ready, I replied that all was ready according to his desire—he then asked when do you propose to depart. I answered, I only wait your orders.—he then asked me if I truly and sincerely trusted in Colonel Macaulay's promises to him, I answered that I trusted most sincerely and so much so that I would answer with my life for Colonel Macaulay's faithfully fulfilling every Engagement or promise made him upon this occasion.—he then said when I go to Cranganore will the Colonel not do me any harm I answered certainly not, I have a brace of loaded Pistols by me and should sooner shoot myself with one of them than advise you to the step if I had the least suspicion of Colonel Macaulay's doing you harm, on the contrary he will I am certain treat you with honor and respect. What then does Colonel Macaulay certainly believe that I shall come there, was his reply. I answered most certainly.—oh he is a fool was the answer, I thought he was a man of sense but I find he has no sense he trusts to my writing and promises I am the Minister of Travancore how could Colonel Macaulay suppose that I would leave my King and Country to live in the Company's Territories was I to do so I would be looked upon as a Traitor by my own King and Cast, and at the same time despised by the Engilsh Government

therefore I now tell you I shall never quit my Country to please Colonel Macaulay, the Colonel wishes my departure very much I am certain as in that case he would assume all power and authority over the Country. He wrote me to discharge the Carnatick Brigade, I will not discharge that Brigade I shall raise five Battalions more and immediately make war against the Company, I answered if you pretend to make war against the Company you will lose your life the Rajah his Country and the Poor Inhabitants will be ruined and destroyed—he then said I have a Lack and fifty thousand Men and Marhattas are at war with the Company and the French and Russians are on their way through Persia and will be in this Country very soon, therefore the Company have no Force at hand to bring against this place; besides I have written and sent people to the Polegars and Moples from Madura to Cananore who are all to a man ready to join when I commence the War. I answered the Company has taken all India, Travancore Excepted, therefore their power is everywhere whoever has informed you of a Marhatta War and that the French and Russians are arrived at Persia, were very wrong as there is not a word of truth in it, and you may be assured the Polygars are not such fools as to join with you, they know the Company's Power and resources too well for that, therefore I now assure you that in the course of fifteen or twenty days the Company's army will arrive by land and sea and soon possess themselves of this Country, and you will most certainly lose your life—he replied it is a custom to make war and afterwards to make a peace therefore I am determined to begin a war. I replied what you say is in some measure true but Believe me if you begin the War the Company will never make Peace with you.—he then said I want to make war, get a Name and then Die, I then asked him why did you send me so often to Colonel Mecaulay to try to conclude this business in an amicable way if you had all this in your heart—he replied I did so to gain time to prepare myself—I then observed I trusted your word, and

took a great deal of trouble in this affair what must Colonel Macaulay think of me now, upon which he replied, oh Colonel Maculay's business is all done to-day, his Head is kicking about the streets of Cochin by this time. Upon which somewhat disconcerted of course I said then Dewan I suppose you reserve the same fate for me, I believed your going according to your promise to Colonel Macaulay, but it seems you have deceived him as well as me, the last time I went to Cochin I took all my money and left it at Colonel Macaulay's House which will be plundered by your people of course, now I have lost my word, I have lost my money, and I suppose you will take my life, and all this in consequence of placing so much confidence in you—he then said I shall do you no harm, you must go and remain prisoner at your House. I should have said that I had before refused to join the Brigade—he then asked how much money did you take to Cochin I replied about twelve thousand Rupees, you shall not lose that money was the reply, I shall give you my Bond on the circar account for the twelve thousand rupees payable on demand with the interest of Eight per Cent until paid I immediately answered I will receive no Bond or any thing else from you on any account, spare my life that is all the favor I ask at present, and I instantly left his presence, I certainly Expected to be murdered before I should reach my own House, I however waited in the outside Cutcharee until he came out which was shortly after, and then saluted him upon which he gave me his Hand telling me not to be afraid, I however had lost all confidence in him—the same moment the Brigade marched off and the Dewan joined them in his Palinqueen. I then returned to my House where I found he had sent the Bond.

To the best of my recollection this is the purport of what past between the Dewan and me from the 27th December 1808 until the 29th Decr."

If Daly is to be believed Velu Tampi hoped to bring about an anti-British alliance of the principal Malabar states with the French and the Marathas. Chimerical as the

scheme may now appear it was not entirely impracticable. The Marathas were still smarting under their recent discomfiture and had not yet been reconciled to their subordinate status. There was no lack of disaffection among the Moplas and Nayars and France was at open war with Britain. A Maratha-Malabar combination backed by France might very well succeed where Travancore and Cochin failed. Velu Tampi had French officers on whom he could rely. Two Frenchmen, Captains La Fobi and Alaire, served in the Carnatic Brigade and we learn from Col. Macaulay that two sons of the former and a near relative of the latter had taken an active part in Velu Tampi's rebellion.[1] As early as the 11th September the Resident had noticed with unconcealed concern the presence of French sailors serving in Arab vessels at Aleppi.[2] On the 16th December he reported to Mr Buchan that two Mahomedans had been despatched by the Dewan to Mauritius on a Maldive vessel to solicit a reinforcement of 500 Artillery and Col. Macaulay believed that "the Govt. of the French Islands could in security run over to Aleppi as many troops as they might be disposed to send", as "the Port of Aleppi may be entered in the midst of the heaviest monsoon gales".[3] On the 21st of December he wrote, "Every one is told that the French and Marathas are to assist the Ram Rajah".[4] Velu Tampi had evidently received exaggerated reports of French success in Europe and there was persistent rumour about early arrival of a French force in Malabar but there is no evidence that he ever opened any negotiation with any of the disgruntled Maratha chiefs. There is no reason, however, to discredit Daly's report; he had nothing to gain by fabricating a false story after the rebellion had been completely suppressed. Col. Daly and Major Hamilton were the only officers of the

1 Colonel Macaulay's letter dated 11th March, 1809. (Secret Cons., 10 April, 1809, No. 3).

2 Secret Consultation, 2nd Jany., 1809, No. 37.

3 Secret Consultation, 23rd Jany., 1809, No 33.

4 Secret Cons., 23rd Jany., 1809, No. 37.

Carnatic Brigade who did not join the rebels and were therefore sure of the pension promised by the Company's government. Though the insurrection of 1808-9 proved a dismal failure Daly's narrative goes far to prove that Velu Tampi could plan on a grand scale and was not an indifferent student of current politics, although he was sadly misinformed about European and Indian affairs. However strongly we may condemn his misdeeds, we cannot but admire the unflinching courage that sustained him till the last moment and enabled him to make his final exit in a manner worthy of the best traditions of his land.

Confession of a Dacoit

Muhammad Husain was a common dacoit and ended, like evil folks of his ilk, at the gallows. No romance hangs about his person, and his confession, a dismal record of ruthless robbery, betrays not a trace of the chivalry, charity and daring that made popular heroes of Bishwanath of Bengal and Tantia Bhil of Central India. One might, therefore, feel that a document of this character could very well go to the scrap heap, but I offer no apology for rescuing it from oblivion. The majority in all societies consists of the toiling masses of common men and women—the uncommonly great and the uncommonly good form the minority everywhere. What touches the common people cannot be ignored by any serious student of history, and the seemingly unimportant records of human frailties have, therefore, for him, an exceptional interest. Muhammad Husain's confession throws a flood of lurid light on the administration of those days. He and his friends had a merry time at the expense of the peaceful population of the rural area, and the responsible authorities stood helpless not because they were indifferent to the cause of peace and order, but because their own agents had proved utterly faithless and untrustworthy. Muhammad Hayat, Muhammad Husain's employer, was himself a police officer, but he soon discovered that the abuse of his office and power was likely to bring him more lucre than the loyal pursuit of his lawful avocation. The Zemindars, the natural guardians of rural peace, had lost their former influence and prestige under the new dispensation, and the less scrupulous of the order had turned to robbery as a fruitful source of profit and power. Muhammad Husain mentions three such scapegraces: Ghulam Haidar Chaudhuri of Pargana Bhulua, Kirtinarain Roy of Ratandi Kalikapur and Ainuddin Shikdar, an influential Talukdar of Tappa Shafipur. Ainuddin led a party

of dacoits in person, if Muhammad Husain is to be credited, while Muhammad Hayat and Kirtinarain preferred to share the spoils with the criminals under their control. It is to be noted that Muhammad Husain began by apprehending some dacoits, but the booty he claims to have recovered bears no comparison with the property of which he and his gang relieved their victims. The inventories of the spoils deserve a careful scrutiny. Cowrie shells were in common use. The Vaidya Chaudhuri of Dashkatha (Dosskatta) had no less than five *Kahans* (6,400) in his hoard which included three thousand rupees in cash. Bullion seems to have been preferred to coins by the rich people of those days—one of the Potdars, robbed by Ainuddin's gang, had no less than forty-one seers of gold in his possession. Silver ornaments seem to have been more in fashion even among the wealthier classes, for we read of silver *paichi* (Ponchee), silver bangles, silver chains and *taktis* (tuctees, diamond-shaped pendants), silver bracelets, silver rings, silver *kankan* (Kungan), silver *gujris* (Koogrow, or Kharu ?), and one family had silver ornaments to the weight of four or five seers. The *nath* (Nuth) or nose-ring, however, was invariably in gold. This testifies to the superstition still current that the breath of a wife is likely to affect her husband's health if she respires over him without some gold in the nose. Brass plates, *cuttorahs* (bowls and cups) and dishes are not much in use to-day in well-to-do houses. Brass has been replaced by the brighter and more lasting bell-metal and "*Tootenague*" dishes have absolutely disappeared though brass *lootahs* (lotas) still hold the field. It is to be noted that shawls seldom figure among the loots of Muhammad Husain, and it may be presumed that the fine products of the Kashmir looms were by no means common in the villages of Bakarganj and the contiguous part of Noakhali, though silk seems to have been much more in demand. Henry Lodge, before whom Muhammad Husain made his statement, was appointed Commissioner of Sunderbans for suppression of robberies in November,

1788. He had his headquarters at Bakarganj and apprehended about 154 dacoits. Muhammad Husain and two of his confederates, Nabi Khan and Munir, suffered the extreme penalty with other Sirdars. Muhammad Hayat, the brain of the gang and Ainuddin Shikdar, an active participant in its misdeeds, were transported to Prince of Wales Island (Penang). The gang operated over a wide area stretching from the banks of the Baleswar in Bakarganj District to Bhulua Pargana in the neighbouring District of Noakhali. It has not been possible to identify all the villages mentioned in the statement, as the Persian original has been lost and the eighteenth century English transliteration is not always helpful. I am indebted to Mr. F. O. Bell, I.C.S., the present Magistrate of Bakarganj, and Mr. B. B. Chakravarti, B.L., Keeper of the Records of the Government of Bengal, for valuable topographical and historical information. It is possible that in the course of the last 150 years some of the villages visited by Muhammad Husain and his friends have been washed away, and some of the families robbed by them have become extinct. But there may be cases of survival, and many rural families of Bakarganj and Noakhali will doubtless be interested in a document in which their native villages and probably some of their ancestors so prominently figure.

II

Translation of a Deposition from Mahomed Hossein taken before Henry Lodge, Esqr. received 23rd January, 1789. Deposition of Mahomed Hossein, Inhabitant of Deolea in Pergunnah Ruttundee Calcapore, made on the 14th January, 1789 or 17th Rubee ulsaany, at Bakergunge—

Mr. Wroughton[1] gave the Girdwary of the Fouzedarry to Mahomed Hyat[2] in the month of Sawun, and Mahd. Hyat nominated me to that office on his part. I went to

1 George Wrougton—Company's Attorney retired in 1788.

2 Muhammad Hayat was a native of Doomki in Pargana Azimpur.

Luckepore[3] accompanied by 650 people in 25 Pulwars[4] and 4 Bhauleas[5] and in the village Mozaldie[6] I seized Mahobut ulla and Mahomed Saduc two Decoits and found in their House 11 Bundles of Tobacco, 22 Seers of oil, 4 spears, 2 Hindostanny Muskets and a bundle of Cloaths and two Boats. Afterwards I seized Malgaazp a Decoit in the village Churbhato,[7] and found in his House two Bundles of Cloths, 100 Rs. in cash, 5 Spears, 2 Hindostanny Muskets, 2 Tootenague[8] and Brass dishes, Cows, a Paundaun,[9] and Cuttoras,[10] 2 golden Jewels, 1 Silver Ponchee.[11] I then seized Sunna Ulla, a Decoit in the village Raytah[12] and found in his House two Tootenague and Brass dishes, 50 Rupees, one Bundle of Cloaths, 3 Buffaloes, 1 Boat, 2 Swords and 2 Targets, 2 Hindostanny Muskets and one Spear—afterwards I took at the same place Poona ulla and Ramdhun Jody two Decoits, and found in their Houses 9 Rupees, 5 pieces of Cloaths, 2 Brass Loothas[13] and Cuttorahs, one Bundle of Cloaths, a gold nutt[14] and 80 Head of Cattle—I then went to Luckipoor, and gave over to Rammohun, Dewan to Sheik Mahomed Hyat, the Decoits and Money and Effects which I had taken. After this I seized, Golaum Hyder Choudry, name of a Zamindar of Pergunnah Bulwa,[15] who is a Dacoit. He had four gold and silver

3 Probably Lakshmipur under Galachipa Police station in Patuakhali Subdivision.

4 Palwar—a country boat of from 15 to 20 tons.

5 Bhaulia—a broad bottomed boat.

6 Is it Char Mojlaji in Tozumaddin P. S or Char Mollaji ?

7 Cannot be identified. Char Bhuta did not exist at the time.

8 Either zinc or pewter or an alloy of zinc, copper and nickel (Hobson-Jobson, p. 932, col. 2)

9 Pandaun—a dish for betel leaves and necessary ingredients.

10 Cups and bowls.

11 Paichi—an ornament for the arms.

12 Either Rohita in Mathbaria P. S. or Rohita in Bhola P. S.

13 Small water pots.

14 A nosering.

15 Bhulua Pargana in Noakhali District.

Rings on his hands and I sent the man with the Rings to Dacca; and went according to the orders of Mahomed Hyat, to Luckipoor to Seize Soorut Sing and Golay Fuckeer, but could not find them. In the month of Jyte, accompanied by the Consuma of Mahomed Hyat named[16] and Chandoomean with 40 People to the House of Mahomed Heneef Choudry in Pergunnah Serail,[17] attacked it, and plundered it of 10,000 Rupees—again in the month of Assar, attended by the same Number of People, we went to Shegarkattoo,[18] attacked the House of Rubbie ulla, and plundered it of 5,000 Rupees—again in the month of Shawun we attacked, with 85 People, the House of Summa ulla Choudry in the village of Chougdea[19] and plundered it of 700 Rupees—again in the Same Month, Sawun, we attacked the House of a Mahajan in a village, whose name I do not recollect, to the Northward of Pergunnah Rajenagur,[20] and found 50 Rupees, 4 Tootenague and Brass Dishes, and 2 Bundles of Cloaths. In the month of Assin we plundered 2 Boats laden with 500 Maunds of Grain, in the village Mogaldie—and in the Month of Shawun the Consumah and the same number of People with us attacked the House of anuntram Fotadar in a village to the Northward of Shawabadpoor,[21] and plundered it of 10,000 Rupees and four Bundles of Cloaths. Last year in the Month of Aughun, we attacked the House of a Choudry at Sundeep[22] plundered it of 10,000 Rupees, four Bundles of Cloaths and 11 Tootenague Dishes, and four Brass Plates, a Brass Paundaun, 2 Silver Toys weighing 3 or 4 Seer, about half a Seer of Gold Toys with 4 Anna and 8 Anna

16 There is a gap here, but elsewhere the Khansama is called Boloo.
17 There is no such Pargana either in Bakarganj or in Noakhali.
18 Seems to be Shekherkati in Nalchiti P. S.
19 Probably Jagdia in Noakhali.
20 Rajnagar. No. 41 of Beveridge's list.
21 Shabazpur.
22 An island and Pargana in Noakhali.

pieces, about 2 pun.[23] In the Month of Sawun at Soona Raanoo,[24] the Consuma and I with the same number of People attacked the House of Sunna ulla Choudry, plundered 11000 Rupees, four Bundles of Silks, 2 Shawls, a pair of Silver Bangles, 8 Necklaces, 40 Pannas or Tuctees,[25] with the silver Chains and pieces of gold about 10 Bourys,[26] 4 pair of Ear Rings and 4 pair of Silver Bracelets, 8 pair of Silver Rings, Ornaments to the Legs, 4 Tootenague Dishes, 4 Brass plates, 4 Brass Cuttorahs, 3 Brass Ewers, 20 Silver Rings and 4 pair of Silver Kungun[27]—we plundered all these things. In the month of Bhadun, Mahomed ally Brother of Mahomed Kullem Gaazy Mahomed, etc., Inhabitants of Bhaatssalla[28] and Noor ulla Moonshe, Brother of Khoorshied Moonshe of Behadrepoor,[29] who had with him 40 People, going 80 Person in each Boat, and having 6 Boats, we went to the Eastward of Luckipoor, about a Day and Half's Journey, to a village called Muttulub[30] in Pergunnah Bulwa Jougdea, to the House of a Mussulman Choudry, and plundered it of 13,000 Rupees, silver ornaments weighing about 4 or 5 Seer, 12 pairs of Silver rings for the 30 Feet,[31] 7 Bundles of Cloths, 2 pieces of Silk Chouly,[32] 2 Tootenague Dishes, 4 pair of Silver ornaments called Koogrow.[33] Last year in the Month of Aughun, with the same people, we went to the Eastward of the

23 A pan = 80.

24 Cannot be identified

25 Takti—a diamond shaped pendant.

26 One Buri = 20.

27 Kankan—a sort of bracelet.

28 Bhatsala in Bakarganj P. S.

29 Bahadurpur. There are several villages of this name. Bahadurpur in Bakarganj P.S. is probably meant.

30 Cannot be identified.

31 Probably *mal.*

32 A short bodice or breast piece worn by ladies.

33 Probably Gujri, a sort of anklet.

Balsore[34] River to the west of Chandpara,[35] to the Village Dosskatta,[36] to the House of Bied[37] Choudry, and plundered it of 3000 Rupees, 5 Bundles of white Cloths and Chouly, 5 Seer of ornaments & 74 gold Nutts, 20 Silver rings, 1 Maund of Cotton, 5 Cawn[38] of Cowries, 10 Seir of Salt, and one Jar of oil. This year, in the Month of Shawun, Ein ul Dein Sheikdar with 27 People, Nubby Khan and his son Zoorawar Khan of Chultaburrea,[39] Khunjur Khan and his son, 27 People, 13 Dandies[40] and 2 Boats, 12 Dandies and 2 Boats, in all 4 Boats. I was in the Boat with Nubby Khan, went to Roopoor[41] to the House of a Fotadar and plundered 15,000 Rs. in 5 Bags which we took from a Chest, a Bag of Silver, about 1 Md. one Seer of Gold, 4 Bundles of Cloths, one Bundle of Silk Sarris—we then came to the Mouth of the Balesore River and divided the plunder among us. Ein ul Dein Shiekdar[42] received about 5,000 Rupees and a Half, the Gold, Silver Shawls and Cloths Khunjier Khan and his son received 5,000 Rupees, and I received 2,000 Rupees. I went to Barrycurn,[43] and the Shiekdar & ca went home. I am a Servant of Mahomed Hyat who Stationed Rammohun Dewan, Baloo Kanseman and Chandoo Mean with 40 people with me, and told me to go with them. I went with them to all these places, robbed, and brought these things and money with me—and

34 The Baleswar forms the western boundary of Bakarganj District and is also called Haringhata and Madhumati.

35 Cannot be identified.

36 Cannot be identified.

37 Vaidya.

38 Kahan = 1280

39 Probably Chaltabunia. There are three villages of the same name in Mathbaria, Patuakhali and Amtali Police stations.

40 Rowers.

41 Cannot be identified.

42 Ainuddin was a resident of Chamta near Niamati and had Taluks in Buzurgumedpur Pargana.

43 Baraikaran in Nalchiti P.S. was at one time the headquarters of the District.

at one time I gave Mahomed Hyat 5,000 Rupees and at another 20,000 Rupees. Boloo Conseman took 500 Maunds of rice. Rammohun Dewan took 5,000 Rupees—Mahomed Ally, Brother to Mahomed Kullean, was with him, and took in the Months of Bhadun and Aughun 5,000 Rupees from the village Dosspara[44] and Golay Doss and[45] Deegpara is the Mohrir[46] of Mahomed Hyat—he took 2,000 Rupees. Mahomed Muneer Brother to Ruffee Hircarrah of Behadrepore was with him, he took at one time 3,000 Rupees and at another 1,100. Roshun Ally Hircarrah of Chawculdea in Pergunnah Deccan shabazpore[47] was with him. He took 1,000 Rupees. Noor Ulla Hircarrah of Balea[48] and Brother of Mahomed Suffy Jemautdar were with him and took 500 Rupees. Kallabad Hircarrah of Ootershawabadpore[49] was with him he took 2,000 Rupees. Rehmut ulla Hercarrah of Hany Choula in Pergunnah Idlepore[50] was with him, and took Rs. 2000—Sunnaulla Hercarrah of Idlepore was with him, and took 700 Rupees. Ruttun Hercarrah of Joosha[51] was with him and took 1,100 Rupees. Govindram Hercarrah is the Gomastah[52] of Mahomed Hyat, he took 2,000 Rupees. Gaazy Mahomed of Bhaatsalla was with him, and took 2,500 Rupees. Burkut ulla Hercarrah of Bhaatsalla was with him, and took 2,500 Rupees. Mahomed Ally of Kelladooma[53] was with him and took 650 Rupees. Sheer Ally of Kishenkatty[54] was with him, and took on his own account and that of Ally Rajah his brother, 600 Rupees. Kerritnarain Roy Zemindar of

44 Daspara in P. S. Bauphal.
45 A mistake for "of".
46 Clerk.
47 Dakhin Shabazpur Pargana, No. 11 of Mr. Beveridge's list.
48 Probably Balia in Mehendiganj P. S.
49 Uttar Shabazpur Pargana, No. 10 of Beveridge's list.
50 Idilpur, No. 6 of Beveridge, now mostly in Faridpur district.
51 Cannot be identified.
52 Agent.
53 Probably Kaladeni in Barisal P. S.
54 Krishnakati in Jhalakati P. S.

Pergunnah Ruttendee Calcapore,[55] I am his Ryott, he sent a Peon to my House and ordered me to give him 2,000 Rupees or he would disgrace me and take it. He is Zemindar, and I am Ryott—I therefore gave him 2,000 Rupees. I have heard from Rubbel ulla of Koolkatty[56] in Selemabad[57] that Ghazimahomed of Bhatsall and Sheer Ally of Kishenkatty and Mahomed Ally of Kelladoma these Sardars with 40 people in 3 Boats went from the village Nullpunea[58] to Backergunge[59] and plundered the House of Ramdeo Fotadar of 4 or 5,000 Rupees. Rubbe ulla told me this at the Cutcherry[60] at Barrycurin. I asked him what he had received he said Rs. 3.

55 Ratandi Kalikapur, No. 9 of Beveridge.

56 Kulkati in Nalchiti P. S.

57. Salimabad Pargana, No. 4 of Beveridge.

58 There are three villages called Nalbunia in Jhalakati, Mathbaria and Nalchiti Police stations.

59 The district derives its name from this place, which once was its headquarters.

60 Kachari—office.

A Note on Major Polier's Resignation.

How little we know about Lt.-Col. Antony Polier! Yet he was not an insignificant person in his days. Of French Protestant extraction and Swiss domicile, he came to India in the year of Plassey a stripling of sixteen[1] and within five years rose to the highly responsible office of the Chief Engineer at Calcutta[2]. He fought under Forde[3], surveyed the coast line from Vizagapatam to Puri[4] and found sufficient time and opportunity to improve his material prospects. By 1774 he had made a small fortune and lent not the inconsiderable sum of Rs. 80,000 to Najaf Khan, the virtual ruler of Delhi[5]. If the sword and the compass provided his main occupation he was not indifferent to the more refined diversions of the intellect. He studied the mythology and literature of India under Pandit Ramchand and though his *magnum opus* was never written he left a few tracts and memoirs that do no little credit to his scholarship. He was the first European to own a complete set of the Vedas. Buckland rightly gives him a place in his *Dictionary of Indian Biography* (p. 339) and there is a brief note on him in *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, Vol. 40, columns 605-606[6]. Unfortunately while the latter lacks the necessary chronology, the former is not free from chronological and factual inaccuracies.

Polier's alien origin seems to have been ignored or condoned when he first entered the military service of the East

1 *Nouvelle Biographie Generale*, Tom. 40, col. 605.

2 Secret Cons. 1775, 24 Feby., no. 10.

3 „ „ 1775, 24 Feby., no. 10.

4 Rennel, *Memoir of a Map of Hindoostan*, pp. 21-22.

5 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. IV., no. 1273.

6 See in this connexion *Asiatic Annual Register*, 1800, Misc. Tracts, p. 29, and *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. I.

India Company. But after he had attained the rank of a Major the Court of Directors refused him further promotion on account of his foreign nationality[7] though his meritorious service had in the meantime earned the approbation of such competent judges as Clive and Warren Hastings. Buckland says that "Further promotion being refused to him, on account of his nationality, he resigned, 1776, and by Hastings' help entered the service of the Nawabs of Oudh, Shuja and Asaf-ud-daula, as architect and engineer: was driven thence by the enmity of the Council; served the Mogul Emperor at Delhi in a military command: Hastings appointed him Lt.-Colonel, with leave to reside at Lucknow." Evidently Buckland has got all his facts wrong. Polier's promotion had indeed been stopped but he did not resign on that account. With Warren Hastings' help he entered the service of Shuja-ud-daula in 1773[8] and was recalled by the Council in 1775 on account of his unauthorised participation in the siege of Agra (1774) and he resigned his commission in October, 1775, not in 1776, because the Council would not allow him to return to Oudh and settle his private affairs. In 1776 Shuja-ud-daula was not alive and Polier was permitted to accept the office of Engineer and Architect under Nawab Asaf-ud-daula in 1780[9]. From 1776 to 1779 he was not in the service of that prince. Let contemporary records tell their own tale.

On the 30th November 1774 General Clavering, Colonel Monson and Mr. Francis informed the Court of Directors that Major "Polier who as they were given to understand by Mr. Hastings, was employed in the Vizier's country on the surveying service only, joined the Army under Nudjuff Cawn and had a considerable, if not a principal share in the Direction of the Siege of Agra". On the 19th December they enquired of the Governor General "Whether Major

7 Pub. Cons. 1775, 14 Sept., no. 6; Sec. Cons. 1774, 19 Dec., no. 2; Sec. Cons. 1775, 24 Feby., no. 10.

8 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. IV, no. 184. 252.

9 Pub. Cons. 1780, 22 June, no. 8.

Polier had any authority from the late Government for assisting at the siege of Agra and whether that officer had communicated to the Governor any account of his participation in the military operations at Agra."[10] The Governor General replied that Major Polier's appointment was not for "surveying service only". He also added that he had heard that "Major Polier was employed by the Vizier to assist Nudjuf Cawn in conducting the siege of Agra and he believes he has letters from him on the subject". The Governor-General found nothing objectionable in Polier's conduct but Clavering and his friends thought otherwise. They held that in the absence of any definite instruction from the Presidency "Major Polier's conduct in that instance has been irregular, we therefore think it unfit that he should be permitted to continue any longer in the dominions of the Vizier".[11] On the 9th February Polier sent a lengthy statement from Fyzabad in which he gives a brief account of his past services.

"In the year 1757", he wrote, "I entered in the Hon'ble Company's service in London as a cadet (an Epoch antecedent to that in which the officers now at the Head of the Brigades were admitted in the service) and arrived in India in 1758, from that time to the end of 1761 I was almost continually on service in the Field both at Mazulypatam under Colonel Forde and in the Bahar Province under Major Carnac, from these two officers I received the most flattering marks of regard and approbation and it was mostly owing to the recommendation of the latter that I was called to the Presidency in the end of 1761 to act under the Chief Engineer as Head Assistant; In that station I remained until September 1762 when the Post of Chief Engineer was conferred on me on the resignation of Mr. Amphlett, and in that capacity I conducted the works for above two years until the arrival of Captain Fleming Martin appointed by the Hon'ble Court of Directors to that charge; With what

10 Sec. Cons. 1774, 19 Dec., no. 1.

11 " " 1774, 19 Dec., no. 2, also 1775, 23 Jan., no, 6.

fidelity and diligence I acquitted myself of that great trust, the many recommendations sent home in my favour and the Board's letter to me on my removal are undisputable Vouchers, I shall therefore omit saying anything further on that subject :—From the end of 1764 to May 1766 when I was appointed a Major by Lord Clive, I remained mostly on service with the army as Field Engineer and did not directly or indirectly engage in the General Resignation of which I was even totally ignorant,—at that period I was one of the officers whose services were deemed necessary to keep the troops in obedience untill order could be restored and I came up for that purpose to Ellahabad In which Province I remained as Major of seapoys untill the end of 1767, when I was called down to the Presidency to take the command of the Garrison and also to superintend and give my opinion relative to the fortifications in conjunction with a Member of the Board deputed for that purpose ;—In this station I was, when in or about August 1768 just on the eve of receiving a Lieut.-Colonel's Commission which the Committee proposed to give me to prevent my being superceded by Captn. Martin who was appointed a Lieut.-Colonel of Artillery from Home, I received the unwelcome and unexpected information of a Bar's being put to my Rank by the Court of Directors :—To a Person of Honour and sensibility, conscious of having always to the utmost of his abilities faithfully and diligently discharged his Duty, so harsh and sudden a blow could not fail of being severely felt ; [Me I must own it struck in a particular manner, nothing less than all the resolution I could muster could keep up my spirits under all the mortifying reflections which occurred to me on this occasion,—For how cruel must it be to an officer after so many years's services and his youth spent, to see all at once his prospects of Honour and independence blasted without the least valid cause given for it or any amends proposed ;—A vain hope that a representation of my case to the Hon'ble Court of Directors would obtain justice for me, helpt me to bear up against this Blow ;—I say a vain hope for a strong

recommendation contained in a Paragraph from the Board in my favour was not in the least attended to at Home and not even answered ; So cruel and in my opinion unjust a treatment pointed out to me that having nothing to expect from that quarter It was necessary I should endeavour to obtain something from the Administration in Bengal as a compensation for the severity used towards me ; Those Gentlemen were acquainted with me, knew my services, and allowed me some merit, on that account I had a right to expect they would do something for me ;—But several years elapsed before any opportunity offered itself and I remained at the Presidency without the least advantage and with the mortification of seeing daily my Junior Officers not only promoted but also restored after resignation and dismission to a Rank above mine.]

Things were in that state when the late Nabob Shoujah dowlah made an application to the administration for a Person to be sent to him qualified to superintend and direct some Fortifications and Buildings he proposed erecting at his Residence ;—Such an occasion of providing for me without interfering with the service or prejudicing any one did not escape those who wished me well and I was accordingly proposed and after much delay appointed to come up here to attend on the Nabob in the capacity he had desired.

[When it is considered how disagreeable my situation was in Calcutta, without the smallest hope of bettering myself and in the way of daily unavoidable mortifications ever attending on supercession, it will not be wondered if I embraced with thankfullness, such an opportunity of alleviating in some shape my uneasiness and anxiety, and I set off with the pleasing conceit that the few years I had to spend in this country would pass in tranquillity of mind and unnoticed and that I had at last a chance of revisiting Europe with a competent mediocrity tho' not with a high Rank and such a fortune as I had a right to expect from my former prospects ;—Buoy'd up by such comfortable Prospects and from the Bar put on me looking on myself as in a manner

secluded from the Army,] With the help of a few Friends I entered into some mercantile engagements as the only road left for me to obtain in a warrantable Manner a small independency, and I flatter myself such a step every thing duly considered cannot be found fault with ;—Deprived of every even the most distant Hope in the line I had embraced on my entering the Hon'ble Company's Service, It would be the height of cruelty to blame me for having endeavoured to better my situation in a way both honourable and justifiable tho' not at all calculated for a Military Man ;—With Gentlemen of your liberal and generous way of thinking I hope what I have here alledged will make my Apology.

I arrived here about a year and a half ago and imagining my situation permanent, I entered into concerns as far as the assistance I received from my friends would allow me, and endeavoured that way the only one in my reach to render my residence here of service to me :—Without the smallest countenance from our administration, or any Public charge which might give me credit or consideration in the Eyes of People who regard Europeans only in proportion as they fear them. [It is not to be wondered at if my situation was far from agreeable and little better than that of the many Europeans in the Nabob's service. It was not long also before it was currently known that I was superceded and judged unfit to raise in the service from the consideration of my being a Foreigner, all these circumstances lost nothing by being retailed here and I should undoubtedly have felt the consequences of it, had not the late Nabob whom I knew ever since his surrendering himself to General Carnac conserved me some Friendship and my own conduct and behaviour which I flatter myself will be found irreproachable, secured it to me spite of all endeavour to the contrary.]

The perplexed and unsettled state in which this country has been ever since my arrival here could not be favourable to my Commercial Views, obliged to accompany the Vizier at his particular desire during the greatest part of his campaign I could not attend to my own concerns and they accordingly

suffered much, However on the Nabob's return to this place having received directions from him to prepare Plans for a Banquetting House at this place and a Palace at Bennares. I flattered myself that having now a fixed employment and in a Branch of all the most agreeable to me, I should at last be able to effect the end of my wishes, and I had the Plans ready for his approbation, when his untimely Death put a sudden stop to my views and his designs.

A few days had not elapsed since the accession of the present Nabob Asefud Dowlah before he applied to me for my assistance in preparing Plans (consonant to the intention of his late Father but which he had not time to put in Execution) for some Forts which he proposes to build in the Borders of his Dominions, viz. at Patergurh, Shawabad, Corah and perhaps Kannoge ; which Forts are only intended as Frontier Garrisons, and I was preparing an address to you Hon'ble Sir and Sirs on this subject requesting your permission to take on me that charge when your order for my recall reached me."

He added that unless he was permitted to stay in Oudh for 9 months or one year to enable him to wind up his private business he would be completely ruined[12]. In answer Polier was told that "the reason of your recall is that you may repair to the Presidency to answer for your conduct in assisting at the siege of Agra without any authority from this Government" and "that you are to repair forthwith and without further delay or excuse to Fort William"[13]. In April he was threatened with arrest should he still continue at Fyzabad[14]. August found Polier at Calcutta. His explanation of his part in the siege of Agra was frank and straightforward :

"I have already informed you Hon'ble Sir and Sirs that I was sent to the late Nabob Shoojah Dowlah to attend on

12 Sec. Cons. 1775, 24, Feb., no. 10. Some of the reflections made by the Major have been omitted owing to the necessity of economy of space.

13 Sec. Cons. 1775, 24 Feb., no. 11-12.

14 „ „ 1775, 26 Apr., no. 5.

him as an Engineer and Architect. Shortly after my arrival at his Court his Excellency took the Field, and having desired I should go along with him, I followed him and for a time without any employment. On our arrival at Etawah which was in the beginning of December 1773 Najhaf Khan who had some time before defeated the Jatts in a pitched battle, drew his Forces towards Agra, Capital of the Soubah of the same name and then possessed by the Jatts;—The Vizir who meant to gain the Friendship of Najhaf Khan, detached from his army about the 15th. December 2 Battallions of seapoys and nine Guns, with orders to act under him in reducing the Place; This was a timely assistance to Najhaf Khan whose army consisting mostly of cavalry was besides that very ill provided for besieging a Fort of strength. The Vizir had been led to think that the very appearance of his Troops would have occasioned the surrender of the Place, but near a month having elapsed since their arrival and the siege being little more forwarded than at first, he began to be extremely uneasy, lest the Reputation of his arms should suffer from meeting with a check just at the opening of his campaign. In this situation he applyed to me for my assistance and begged I would repair to Agra to give what directions I should think proper towards forwarding the surrender of the Place: This Request considering my station with him in the capacity of an Engineer, together with his being a party concerned in the Event of the siege, could not with propriety be refused by me, and as a whole month must have elapsed before I could receive an answer from Calcutta on the subject, which delay might have been highly detrimental to his affairs, I hesitated not in complying with his desire, also from a conviction that the Vizir's Field Operations had the sanction of our administration, and accordingly repaired to Agra without loss of time.

I acquainted fully then the Hon'ble Governor with all these circumstances as I had before at times with every thing material that had come to my knowledge and had the satisfaction shortly after my return from Agra, to have it

signified to me by his Aid-de-Camp. "That he intirely approved of my conduct."

I have thus truly and candidly related to you the whole affair and trust that what I have said will exculpate me from the charge of having acted without authority from Government".[15]

It is to be noted that Hastings had already informed his colleagues that Major Polier had in fact written to him about the siege of Agra and as early as 5th June 1774 the Nawab Vizier had actually requested the Governor to order Major Polier to assume the command of his troops.[16] Polier again solicited the Council to allow him to return to Oudh and undertook not to "interfere in any political or other transactions, except those absolutely relative to my own commerce and the settling my affairs":[17] His request found no favour with the Council and on the 5th October Polier sought their "permission to resign the Hon'ble Company's service"[18]. This in short is the story of Polier's supercession and resignation.

On the 31st December 1781 Polier addressed a letter to Hastings from Benares in which he once again renewed his request to be readmitted into the Company's service with the rank of Lt. Colonel[19]. He was accordingly appointed Superintendent of the Surveys in the Upper Provinces (beyond the Karmanasa)[20]. Polier once contemplated a visit to Gomukhi, the reputed source of the Ganges. Whether he actually did so we do not know.[21]

There are ample materials in our archives for a more or less complete account of Polier's Indian career and it is time that the common errors about him and his contemporaries should be removed.

15 Pub. Cons. 1775, 14 Sept., no. 6.
16 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. IV, no. 1086.
17 Pub. Cons. 1775, 14 Sept., no. 6.
18 „ „ 1775, 14 Sept., no. 7, and 30 Oct., 1775, no. 7.
19 „ „ 1782, 15 Apr., no. 14.
20 „ „ 1782, 18 Mar., no. 18 ; 1786. 8 May, no. 3.
21 *Calendar of Persian Correspondence*, Vol. VI, no. 1292.

Lord Cornwallis and Slave Trade in Bengal.

Slavery as an institution was not repugnant to Hindu or Muslim law. While an owner was clearly enjoined to treat his human chattels with kindness and courtesy his proprietary right in them was never questioned. Slavery prevailed all over the civilised world and formed an economic basis of organised society. The East India Company cannot, therefore, be blamed if they found nothing unnatural or inhuman in a system of property which had the fullest support of law and sanction of antiquity when they assumed the government of Bengal. Though Lord Mansfield decided as early as 1772 that "as soon as a slave set his foot on the soil of the British islands he became free," slavery continued to flourish in the British colonies and the slave-owners of Jamaica found an able advocate in youthful Gladstone as late as 1833. Mansfield's judgment, however, did not render traffic in slaves in any way illegal nor did it immediately lead to the abolition of slavery in the Empire. It only made importation of slaves into the British Isles unprofitable. The trade itself was vigorously denounced by humanitarians like Sharpe, Clarkson and Wilberforce, but public conscience was slow to respond and the legislature long declined to be moved by their impassioned eloquence. In 1776 the House of Commons refused to admit that "the slave trade was contrary to the laws of God and the rights of man." In 1792 the Commons rejected Wilberforce's motion to prohibit further importation of slaves into the colonies of the West Indies by 163 votes to 88, and it was not until 1807 that traffic in human cargo was ultimately declared illegal by the British Parliament. Lord Cornwallis and his employers could, therefore, rightly claim to be far in advance of the public opinion in India and England, for they set their face against this nefarious commerce and made an honest attempt to put a stop to it full

seventeen years before the mother country decided to withhold her legal sanction from a trade that brought more lucre than honour. On July 27, 1789, Mr. Hay, in his capacity as Secretary to the Government of Fort William, published the following proclamation in an extraordinary issue of the *Calcutta Gazette*:—[1]

"Whereas information, the truth of which cannot be doubted, has been received by the Governor-General in Council that many NATIVES and some EUROPEANS in opposition to the Laws and Ordinances of this country and the dictates of Humanity, have been for long time in the practice of purchasing or collecting Natives of both Sexes, Children as well as Adult, for the purpose of exporting them for Sale as Slaves in different parts of India or elsewhere, and whereas the Governor-General in Council is determined to exert to the utmost extent the Power and Authority vested in him, in order to prevent such practice in future, and to deter by the most exemplary punishment those Persons who are not to be otherwise restrained from committing the offence, His Lordship hereby declares that all and every Person or Persons, subject to the Jurisdiction of the Court, or in any respect to the Authority of this Government, who shall in future be concerned directly or indirecly in the abovementioned inhuman and detestable Traffic, shall be Prosecuted with the utmost rigour in the Supreme Court at the expense of the Company, and if British-born Subjects, shall be forthwith ordered to Europe, or if such Person or Persons be not subject to the Court's Jurisdiction, he or they, upon information being given to the Magistrate of the Place or District in which the offence shall have been committed, shall be apprehended by him, and kept in confinement, to be dealt with according to the Laws of the Country.

And that no one may plead ignorance hereof, the SUPERINTENDENTS of the Police for the Town of Calcutta, and the MAGISTRATES of ADAWLUTS in the several parts of the Country, are hereby required to give immediate Notice of this Proclamation in such manner as shall

render the knowledge of it universal to Persons of all Descriptions, and to repeat the same on the First Day of January in every Year: They are further directed to pay the strictest attention to the Regulations contained in it, and to take the most active steps in their power to enforce them.

And that all Persons offending against this Proclamation may be brought to punishment for the same, and the unhappy Sufferers rescued from misery, a Reward of One Hundred Sicca Rupees is hereby offered for the discovery of every such offender to be paid on his conviction before the Supreme Court of Judicature, or before the Magistrate of the District, and of Fifty Rupees for each Person of either Sex, who shall be delivered from Slavery or illegal confinement in consequence of such discovery. The money will be paid to the Informer or Informers on his or their application to the Secretary of Government and presenting to him a Certificate of the conviction of the Person or Persons committing the Offence of which such Informer or Informers made discovery.

The GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN COUNCIL further recommends to British Commercial Houses and Private Merchants to assist, as far as depends upon them, in carrying these Regulations into effect by taking the most effectual means in their power to prevent the Commanders of their Ships or Vessels, or of Ships or Vessels consigned to them, or otherwise placed under their directions, from carrying away Natives of this Country in order to sell them for Slaves.

The MASTER ATTENDANT of this Port is hereby forbidden to grant in future an English Pilot to any Ship or Vessel, the Commander of which shall not have previously declared upon Oath that there are not then on board, and that he will not during his continuance in the River consent to receive on board, any Natives to be exported as slaves with an intent to dispose of them at some Foreign Place, or whom he (the Commander) has any reason to imagine will be disposed of as such after they leave this country.

"And the MASTER ATTENDANT is hereby directed to give notice to all the Native Pilots that, if they should pilot out any Vessel having on board Natives of this Description, knowing or believing them to be such, the Privilege of piloting will be taken from them for ever, and their Names and Offence registered. And that no one may plead ignorance of this order, it is hereby directed that it be placed constantly in view at the Banksaul in the English and Country Languages.

Proclaimed at Fort William in Bengal, this 22nd day of July, 1789.

By order of the Governor-General in Council

E. Hay, Secretary to the Government."

Cornwallis was fully aware that prohibition of slave trade in itself might not go far to improve the lot of the slaves. On the contrary the consequent depreciation of their market value might conceivably affect their master's interest in them and cause in the less considerate owners an intelligible disinclination to maintain their human stock at the proper standard. The peculiar custom of the country often recognised a limited kind of slavery which permitted the owner to take all sorts of liberties with the temporary slaves. It was obviously necessary that the state should extend its protection to these unfortunate wretches and get their rights legally defined. Cornwallis proceeded with great caution. Anxious as he was to insure the welfare of the slaves, he was not prepared to alienate the owners and thereby defeat his humanitarian object He caused another proclamation to be drafted but before its publication he sent it to Muhammad Riza Khan for his considered opinion. As will be obvious from the letter quoted below, the Governor-General did not want to offend the vested interests, while the enclosure clearly testifies to his solicitude for the well-being of a long-suffering section of society.

"To Muhammad Riza Khan,[1] dated the 3rd August, 1789.

1 Imperial Record Department : Translations of Letters Issued, Vol. 35, pp. 128-29, No. 145.

"Being desirous at all times to adopt such measures as will tend to the happiness of the people of these countries who are under the protection of the Company: and more particularly those whose poverty and indigence makes it necessary, in order for their subsistence, for them to put themselves under the authority of others more opulent, even to that degree as to sell themselves and their children as slaves, I have come to the Resolution of issuing a Proclamation containing such Regulations as shall be productive of the success of my wishes. But as this practice of purchasing and keeping people as slaves has been long established, and is in great usage among both Mussulmans and Hindus: and not desirous, however great the objects in view, to infringe the customs and established usage of this country, or in any sense to act contrary to the Laws of the different sects of the people of these soubahs, I enclose you a (Persian) Translation of the Proclamation at present in contemplation to be published, and request you will give in writing your opinion specifically on the contents of it, and state to me such objections as may occur to you to any part of it.

"*Proclamation.*[2]—Whereas it is the ancient custom of this country to keep boys and girls as slaves for stated period and consideration, the Governor-General is pleased to promulgate the following Rules in order to alleviate, as much as possible, the misery of those unfortunate people, who, faced with starvation and death in abnormal times, offer themselves or their children to serve as *ajirs*[3] to others who would provide them with food and clothing.

"In all cases where a person offers himself as an *ajir*, an agreement in the form given in the schedule annexed[4] will

2 Imperial Record Department: Copies of Persian Letters Issued, Vol. 20, pp. 544-47, No. 188. This copy is badly worm-eaten and in parts unintelligible.

3 One who has entered into an engagement for a stipulated sum to serve another for a specific term, or until he repays the sum advanced; hireling, bondsman.

4 Not forthcoming.

have to be executed before a District Judge, who shall register it after fully satisfying himself about the correctness of the entries and propriety of the terms and conditions of the contract. The document will be handed over to the *ajir* duly signed by the District Judge and the *Qazi*. The agreement must be executed in all cases whether the *ajir* is male or female or the person taking the *ajir* is of either sex. If a male person takes a female *ajir* to serve him, it shall be specified in the agreement that he would not cohabit with her without proper wedlock, otherwise the contract will become void. Anyone found guilty of acting contrary to this rule in his dealings with his *ajir* shall be punished by the District Judge according to the law of the land and the *ajir* shall be set free and his bond cancelled.

"It shall be optional for the *ajir* to leave his master after the expiry of the term of the bond or to continue with him according to his free choice. If, however, he is detained after that period against his will, the Court will compel the *mustajir* to pay him reasonable remuneration for his or her services for the period so detained.

"Anyone giving information of any person engaged in the slave trade shall be rewarded and the person so engaged shall be duly punished. [Those who earn their livelihood from] the auction of slaves at Calcutta or other towns are hereby warned [not to sell *ajirs*] as slaves, otherwise they would be punished by the Supreme Court."

Muhammad Riza Khan fully shared his lordship's anxiety for safeguarding what slender rights the ancient laws and customs of the country still conceded to the slaves but suggested a few alterations in the original draft, as will be evident from the letter that follows, in order to remove certain unnecessary inconvenience that the slaves and the owners alike might otherwise experience. It is to be noted that he was definitely of opinion that in times of famine and scarcity slavery offered the only alternative to death from starvation and the loss of personal liberty found ample compensation in assured provision of food and raiments. It was

in exceptional cases that the *mustajirs* (owners of *ajirs* or slaves) subjected their *ajirs* to harsh and unkind treatment. During the Great Famine of 1770 thousands of poor people perished of hunger, Muhammad Riza Khan asserts, because a sufficient number of *mustajirs* did not come to their rescue. Hundreds of famished people no doubt would like to sell themselves to men of opulence capable of providing them with a miserable hut and two meals a day.

Letter from Nawab Muhammad Riza Khan,[1] dated 22 *Zulqa'da,* 1203 A.H. (15 August, 1789), received 20 August—"I have received your lordship's letter enclosing the draft of a proclamation regarding people who deliver themselves up as bondsmen to those who support them in times of distress and want. (Here follows a recapitulation of his lordship's letter.) Your lordship desires to know if there is any objection or difficulty in promulgating the order. In compliance with your lordship's order I venture to offer my views on the subject as I understand it. In this country, even the poorest man will not offer himself or his children to become the slave of another unless for want of sustenance he is confronted with the alternative of life or death. In times of famine or disorder when thousands of men lose their lives some poor men would surrender themselves and their children to some wealthy person for a small consideration, or none at all, in order that their lives might be saved in that hour of utter helplessness. When the crisis has passed some of them would stay with their masters of their own accord while others run away to their homes, if they are not treated well. If the case goes to court the Judge orders the release of such bondsmen who are technically called *ajirs.* But most masters treat them with kindness and consideration and maintain their honour and employ them on the work for which they are suited. They scrupulously refrain from treating them in any unlawful manner. Such relationship is

1 Imperial Record Department: Original Persian Letters Received, 1789, Nos. 201-02.

advantageous to both parties. In the draft proclamation it is laid down that no one can be made an *ajir* without the execution of the prescribed bond before a District Judge. The difficulty in complying with this condition will be that many men who might be compelled by dire distress to offer themselves to their own countrymen to serve as *ajirs* may not be able to approach the District Judge and thus lose all hopes of saving their lives. Similarly, the *mustajirs* (or those who would like to take the *ajirs*) would be deterred by reason of having to undertake long journeys in order to reach the District Judge and then to execute a bond fixing the amount of the wages and the period of the service of the *ajir* according to the direction of the court, whereas according to the ancient custom the *ajirs* and *mustajirs* settled the terms among themselves. In the famine of 1177 Bengali (1770-71 A.D.) and that of the last year thousands perished for want of *mustajirs* to support them. In my humble opinion, therfore, the procedure for adopting an *ajir* should be simplified so that those reduced to the extremity of offering themselves to their own countrymen to serve as *ajirs* may get instant relief and save their lives as soon as a *mustajir* agrees to take them. Such conditions as will lead to delay, procrastination and hindrance should not, therefore, be included in the proclamation. I have accordingly drafted a fresh proclamation embodying such terms as will protect the *ajirs* from severe hardship and will prevent their being subjected to cruelty, oppression and unlawful treatment, which in fact is your lordship's intention. I enclose it for your lordship's approval.

"*Enclosure.*—Whereas it is the ancient custom of this country to keep boys and girls as slaves for stated period and consideration, the Governor-General is pleased to promulgate the following rules in order to alleviate the sufferings and improve the lot of such of the poorest people who, faced with starvation and death in abnormal times, offer themselves or their children to serve as *ajirs* to those who would provide them with food and clothing.

"1. The District Judge shall take bonds from the zamindars and *ta'alluqdars* under him that if any poor man shall for want of food and clothing become the *ajir* of some well-to-do person or offer his children in that capacity, the local zamindars and *ta'alluqdars* shall get a bond executed, specifying the amount of the consideration money and the period of service agreed upon by the parties. The bond shall contain the further provision that the *ajir* cannot be sold to any foreigner, must not be oppressed and must be provided with adequate food and clothing. It may be written either in Persian or Bengali and must be witnessed properly and sealed with the seal of a *qazi*. The zamindars and *ta'alluqdars* will also keep a record of the transaction containing the name, father's name and address of both the *ajir* and the *mustajir*. They will also enquire whether the *mustajir* has the means to support the *ajir*. If it is found that he carries on slave trade and purchases ten or twenty or more poor children in order to sell them, then he must be produced before the District Judge to be punished according to law.

"2. If any person, whether Muslim or Hindu, takes an *ajir*, whether male or female, major or minor, he can employ him or her on such work as is permissible under the Muslim and Hindu law. But anyone found guilty of mutilating the *ajir's* person by cutting off his or her ear or nose, or branding or chaining him or her, or committing rape or unnatural offence on him or her, or selling him or her to a foreigner as a slave, or forcing him or her to lead a life of sin for earning money will be punished by the District Judge according to the law of the land, and the *ajir* will be set free and his bond cancelled.

"3. The provisions of rule 2 shall apply equally to both *ajirs* and *mustajirs*, whether male or female.

"4. It shall be optional for the *ajir* either to leave his master after the expiry of the term of the bond or continue with him according to his free choice. If he is detained by the *mustajir* after that period, the Court will compel the

latter to pay him a reasonable remuneration for his or her services.

"5. The rules of this notification shall not apply to those who became *ajirs* or slaves before the date of its promulgation.

"6. Anyone giving information of any person selling *ajirs* to a foreigner as slaves will receive a stated sum of money as reward. The person who is proved to have been engaged in such trade will receive a deterrent and exemplary punishment.

"7. Anyone giving information of any person purchasing boys and girls or men or women with the object of exporting them as slaves to another country will receive a monetary reward. The person engaged in such trade will be punished, the *ajirs* will be set free and sent to their homes at the cost of the *mustajirs*. Those who earn their livelihood from the auction of slaves at Calcutta or other towns are warned not to sell *ajirs* as slaves, otherwise they would be punished by the Supreme Court."

It is needless to observe that a long-standing evil cannot be undone with a stroke of the pen. When an illicit trade offers ample profit, human ingenuity is never at a loss to find some means of circumventing the inconvenient law. The slave-dealers of Europe long evaded the invigilation of the British fleet, and it was futile to expect that Cornwallis should succeed in a task to which the greater resources of the British Government later proved unequal. The Governor-General was lucky in securing the co-operation of his French neighbour of Chandernagore. The *Calcutta Gazette* of the 17th September, 1789 (*Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, Vol. II, pp. 228-29) noted with approbation and pleasure that "Monsieur Montigny, Governor of Chandernagore, has lately issued a proclamation prohibiting all persons within the jurisdiction of the French Government from purchasing or transporting any of the natives of these provinces as slaves and, in order more effectually to prevent this infamous practice, a reward of forty rupees is offered to any person

who shall give information of the offender, besides the sum of ten rupees to be given to each slave who shall be released in consequence. Both sums were to be paid by the offender. The Master Attendant of Chandernagore is also directed to see that no native be embarked without an order signed by the Governor, and all Captains of vessels trading to the port of Chandernagore are strictly prohibited from receiving any natives on board." The Governor of Chandernagore had apparently taken his cue from his British *confrere*, for both the proclamations bear the same features. But the joint Anglo-French campaign proved ineffective and two years later the *Calcutta Gazette* mournfully commented (2nd June, 1791, *Selections*, Vol. II, p. 291) that "from the late excellent regulations of this Government, and the co-operation of the foreign Settlements, we were induced to hope that the detestable traffic of transporting children from provinces as slaves had been entirely abolished; we have been the more concerned, therefore, to hear that a Telingah vessel was stopped near Ingellee last week by the activity of Mr. Hewitt, who went on board the vessel himself, and liberated seven and twenty unfortunate wretches, boys and girls of different ages, who had been kidnapped and put on board."

On the 11th September, 1794, another proclamation signed by Mr. Hay (*Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, Vol. II, pp. 132-34) sounded a note of frustration. Despite the reward offered by the Government for the apprehension of slave-dealers and the vigilant watch kept over the Europe-bound vessels, "sundry persons, natives of Bengal and other parts of India, had been unlawfully and unjustly sold as slaves" at St. Helena. It appears that the poor victims were passed off as personal servants of a passenger when the ship left Calcutta and were later sold at St. Helena and other settlements on the way when a suitable purchaser was found. Past and future offenders were threatened with "the severest displeasure of Government and the most rigorous prosecution in the courts of law" and "all persons, in whose service

natives shall embark from Bengal for England," were required "to give good and sufficient security against such natives being sold, or given away as slaves, at St. Helena, or at any other place or settlement, during the voyage of Europe," but it may be safely surmised that this proclamation met with no better success than its predecessors.

The glory and honour of abolishing slave trade in India was denied to Cornwallis. But in all fairness we should judge him by what he intended and not by what he achieved. A man's ideals sometimes form a better measure of his real worth than his success.

Dr. St. John on India

Dr. St. John's Indian career was brief but not uneventful. The first trained lawyer to be appointed a judge at Bombay, he witnessed the end of Keigwin's rebellion, took charge of the island from Sir Thomas Grantham as King's Judge, assumed the style and rank of Chief Justice, it appears, without sufficient legal warrant, incurred the displeasure of Sir Josia and Sir John Child, was unceremoniously dismissed and left India in disgrace. He came, he quarrelled and he got the sack; and all these happened within the brief period of three years. He took up the duties of Judge Advocate in November 1684, got his dismissal in September 1687, and left for home early next year (12th January 1688) in the good ship *Success*.

St. John was by no means a man of straw. A member of Middle Temple, he had received the degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of Leyden and when the East India Company wanted a trained lawyer, well versed in civil laws, to preside over the Admiralty Court at Bombay, the selection went to St. John. He enjoyed the influential patronage of Lord Rochester and Sir Leoline Jenkins and had, therefore, friends at court who were not to be lightly trifled with. Zinzan, the Deputy Governor of Bombay, referred in more than one letter to St. John's powerful patrons at home. Pompous and self-opinionated, St. John was by no means devoid of good sense or ability. His report on Keigwin's rebellion was marked by clear insight and rare political acumen. It is extremely doubtful whether his attempt to extend his jurisdiction would, under normal circumstances, lead to a breach with Sir John Child whose friendship and good opinion he had at first tried to cultivate. But the General did not believe in the independence of the judiciary and St. John was not prepared to submit to his dictation in matters pertaining to law. His

independence was treated as insolence and insubordination and led to dismissal and disgrace. As Sir Charles Fawcett points out, "It is clear, therefore, that what really influenced Child in deciding that Dr. St. John should not be given the Chief Justiceship, of Bombay was the latter's taking cognizance of accusations against Child himself. This was regarded as insolence and a presumptuous challenge to the authority of the 'General' by one who, under the Commission of the Company, was to be subordinate to the President and the Deputy Governor of Bombay." St. John was, therefore, first superseded and then dismissed. Wyborne and Vaux who were preferred to him were laymen and relied more on their common sense than on their legal learning which was necessarily limited. St. John resolved to place his grievances before the King and described the political condition of India in a letter addressed to His Majesty. Evidently the draft was completed while he was still at Bombay and it was revised subsequently during his voyage home. This was probably the last epistle that St. John was destined to write on Indian affairs. He reached home in July 1688; the Glorious Revolution of that year ruined once for all what little prospects he had of avenging his wrongs. In August of that year Josiah assured John that St. John "is a poor inconsiderate and weak man, and signifies no more than cypher here." The cypher counted for less than nothing when the more substantial figures from whom he derived his importance left the political arena.

A copy of the letter printed below was enclosed by St. John in his letter to Pepys on the 29th August 1688. It ultimately found its way to the Bodleian Library of Oxford and is now published with the kind permission of the Keeper of the Western Manuscripts.

St. John's letter on India derived its importance more from its authorship than from its substance. Very few, if any, of his countrymen in India could claim St. John's education and learning. He had picked up a few Persian

words during his short stay at Bombay and had access to people of power and prestige. Yet his account is not free from chronological inaccuracies. He rightly observes that the Portuguese anxiety to please the Grand Moghul offended the Marathas, and led to the Luso-Maratha War. It is interesting to note that the fall of Bijapur did not mean the immediate subjugation of the Kingdom as a whole, but what interests us most is the reluctance of the Surat merchants to make any complaint against the English who had captured most of their ships at sea. Bombay, defenceless and weak, apprehended Moghul invasion and there was alarm and panic among the civil population which ultimately proved groundless.

If St. John's dates and facts are not free from error are we justified in placing implicit faith in every information that the less educated and by no means better informed English Factors transmitted to their friends and superiors in England? Their evidence can be unquestioningly accepted only when the Factors speak from personal knowledge and claim first-hand information about contemporary events. St. John's criticism of Child and the East India Company may not be fair and impartial but his review of current Indian events fairly reflects the popular views about men and things.

MSS. RAWL. A 171 FOL. 52 *ob.*

May it please your most sacred Ma[jes]tie*

As I constantly discharged all care and endeavours in remitting to your Ma[jes]tie ye best intelligence I could by his grace of Canterbury his conveyance (as injoyned by his late ma[jes]tie of ever blessed memory) so finding to my greate griefe how things frame backward and untoward through ye ill managery of those att ye helme there, I held it now my bounden duty, rather to discharge ye reputation of

* The letters dropped from the abbreviated words in the original ms. have been indicated by means of square brackets.

my discretion, then not faithfully your sacred Person w[i]th some impartiall intimation thereof, in w[hi]ch I have ye more bestowed my paines att this time because I am very well assured, your ma[jes]tie will find it as different from what may be represented by ye East India Compa[ny], as true, in substance, and every individuall, as I doe in all submissive humbleness leave with the depth of your Royall judgem[en]t and consideration and when I shall have ye honour to satisfie your Ma[jes]tie w(i)th ye advantages. I had in drawing on ye best intelligence before any other of your subjects in India, I humbly conceave it will not only prove of entire satisfaction, but also of as pregnant conviction ag[ains]t all suggestion to the contrary.

The eldest prince Sha Alum sonne to Orangsha being arrived w[i]th a formidable army Sombajee Raja by the same Princes brother Sultan Eckbar's[1] advice and persuasions, struck up a peace with ye Portuguese, as dreading ye Mogulls Forces w[hi]ch were approached so neare him, and already entered his countrey, but kept not his word not longer then till Sha Allum had ascended the Gaat againe[2], ye season of the yeare not permitting so vast an army to stay any longer in Concan for want of water and forrage, w[hi]ch caused a greate mortallity among ye souldiers, horses, elephants and oxen. The Mogull his father observing and finding by experience that he could not doe any good upon Sombajee until he reduced his confederates to obedience (like a sound Politician and experienced warrier) resolved to march to Visapore and besiedge it, w[hi]ch he successfully compassed, and after he had spent two years and halfe before it, w[i]th a greate loss of his men, haveing so farr exhausted his treasure, yt he melted downe all his vessells of gold and silver to pay his Army tooke it in December 86, it being and

1 Prince Akbar arrived at Shambhaji's Court in June 1681.

2 Sambhaji raised the siege of Goa as Shah Alam advanced towards the city. Peace was made but hostilities were renewed when Shah Alam began his retreat in March 1684.

is held to be the strongest and best fortified citty of all India[3], he being a Shai[4] by Religion different to ye Mogulls, he being a Sunny, its king Sicandersha[5] falling also into his hands, together with all his vast treasure ; He haveing found good success here after he had settled

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all matters in the safest posture and manner he could in yt Kingdome of Deccan (tho made no perfect conquest thereof in regard that Serja Can and other omraus held out still[6], and would not come in to yield and submitt to him) leaveing considerable forces att Visapore, marched away w[i]th the rest of his Army towards Hyderabhad, and streightly besiedged ye castle of Golcundah, where att first he found such strong resistance by ye besiedged as obliged him to retreate above [* * *] Court and leave all his Artillery behind him, which was taken and carried into ye castle together with three eminent omraus who had command of 3 distinct batteries which they raised against ye castle, who thus made prisoners of Warr,[7] were not withstanding most honourably and civilly used by yt King Abdul Mohzensha, who commanded his principall ministers and officers to shew them his stores of provisions, powder, shott, ammunition etc., he had for endureing a long siedge, who urged might last and hold out eight yeares if it should be continued so long, and haveing given them (like a noble enemy) theire libertie and to each a rich serpas and horse desired ym that when they

3 The siege began in April 1685 and Bijapur capitulated in September 1686. The siege therefore did not last more than a year and six months (actually five months and 11 days).

4 Shia.

5 Sikandar Adil Shah.

6 According to Moghul account Sharza Khan also entered the imperial service with a *mansab* of six thousand and the title of Rustam Khan.

7 One of the prisoners was Ghairat Khan, Chief of Aurangzib's Artillery. The captured officers were treated kindly and sent back to the Moghul camp.

arrived att courte to present ye Mogull theire master his most humble service, and make manifest to him how desirous he was to submit to any thing in reason his imperial majestie should require of him, so that he would be pleased to lett him live in peace and amity with him, and that if they found him averse thereunto, then to give him an accompt how he was provided with all manner of necessaries for a valiant and long siedge ; But they did so farr exasperate the Mogull, as that he immediately gave order for cutting off of halfe their muntzub[8] or pay, and sent them to Bengala[9] (which is looked by such as are in the Mogull's service no better then exile) and resolved to returne to Golcundah and besiedge it anew, so soone as he recruited his army sending his sonne Sha Allum in ye interim w[i]th such troopes as he had under his command as forerunner of the army, who being arrived there instead of useing hostility against yt King (blinded with greate presents and selfe interest as most of the Mahometan princes are) concluded (without any commission from his father for the same) a peace w[i]th him w[hi]ch ye Mogull his father had no sooner notice of then he caused him and all his sonnes to be apprehended and secured under very close and rigorous confinement, and so continueth to this time for any thing I know to the contrary.[10]

Orangsha ye Mogull being thus inraged ag[ains]t Abdull Mozensha[11] and ye rather because he is a Shai in Religion and not a Sunny prosecuted the warr more vigorously, that he never rested till he became conqueroar both of that King and Kingdome, he entring that castle[12] on the 24th

8 Mansab.

9 St. John was correctly informed. Ghairat Khan was degraded and transferred to Bengal. Another noble lost his title.

10 Here St. John's chronology is wrong. Shah Alam and his sons had been placed under arrest prior to Ghairat Khan's disgrace.

11 Abul Hasan Qutb Shah.

12 Golkonda surrendered on the 21st September 1687. The discrepancy, however, is trifling if we take into account the difference between the old and the new styles. 24th Zulqada corresponds to 1st October, 1687.

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of the Mahometan moone Zulkhad w[hi]ch was ye 2nd of our October 1687 and found in one vault onely of ready money no less than 50 crores of pagodoes of rupees 4¼ each, w[hi]ch makes sterling £252 112500 and still finds out more daily under ground particular treasure accumulated by ye greate and famous prince Ram Raja (who kept his Court in Narsinga[13] and other successive princes of y[e]t empire of diamonds, jewells and other precious stones so many and such a vast quantity as the Persians very properly call it Beh Bah[14] that is to say inestimable and not to be vallued.

This victorious prince ever since he made himselfe master of this castle busied himselfe mostly in sending away ye treasure and aquisitions made to Agra and Dilly to secure all in his impregnable and strongholds there ; By late letters and intelligence there I understand that he had sent thither 5000 camells loaden with gold and silver w[hi]ch hath enabled him to make warr with all ye Rajahs and Princes of India that will not buckle and bend to him submissingly and subjugate them especially those who are not of his owne superstitious Mahometan Religion.

His yearly revenue of Hyndostan before he conquered these two kingdoms of Deccan and Golcundah amounted unto 44 crors of rupees (rupee is ster 2s 3d), and now is guessed and calculated to importe verry neare 100[15], w[hi]ch is sterling £ 112500000. Tis credibly reported yt he sent a very potent Army ag[ains]t ye Queen of Canara, whome if he subdueth will prove of very bad consequence not onely to ye Portuguese but us also ; in regard it will deprive both of being supplyed with rice, Goa cannot

13 Vijayanagar, so called by the Portuguese after the founder of the 2nd Dynasty. It is however extremely unlikely that all the hoarded wealth of Vijayanagar went to Golkonda alone.

14 *Bebaha* (Persian) inestimable, and not Beh Bah.

15 The new conquests could not have added even one-tenth of the sum mentioned to Aurangzib's revenue.

subsist without Barcelor and Mangalore, which is our case also, Bombay being so small that it is not at all able to subsist of itselfe, and without territories annexed to it is no better then an insignificant cypher.

That this Mogull Orangsha is a capitall enemy to all Christians and others, who are not Mahometan votaries, is most certaine and obvious, and it is very observable how politiquely he laboureth to extirpate and shoulder them out of all India, especially Hyndostan ; for haveing conquered Canara, is resolved to send another army and reduce under his obedience all ye Malabars country along as farr as Ramser to which wee commonly give ye appellation of Cape Comorine, he being already master of all ye inward countrey of Carnateck and coast of Cormandell as far as Jaggernatt and Ballosore, w[hi]ch confineth w[i]th his greate and vast province of Bengala (formerly divided into severall kingdomes). In what condition our English att Forte St. George are for want of good intelligence cannot informe, I feare the English in the Bay of Bengala (of whome t'is reported to have made

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peace with Shaesta Can ye Mogull's unckle[16]) that t'is not att all honourable as it should be, for in ye judgem[en]t of those understanding experienced persons I discoursed with, it had been much better, and farr more adviceable to have delayed it for a time, rather then to have concluded it so inconsistent w[i]th y[ou]r Ma[jes]ties honour and prejudice to ye publique weale of ye English nation but as long as it may consist with some present convenience or interest of the Company w[hi]ch never regard futurity, or present improvement upon expence) t's not att all strange to me that your Ma[jes]ties honour be forgett, when I can myself instance wherein I argued ye pointe w[i]th true honesty and integritie viz Your Ma[jes]ties honour ag[ains]t ye Generall and Counc[i]ll of

16 Reference is obviously made here to the Sutanati convention of 1687.

Suratt, and the answer made by Gen[era]ll Child was; this is ye King's honour and this is my Right Hon-[ora]ble masters interest, whose bread I eate, and theire interest shall precede now and take place, is in effect it did, and in my judgement most most disgracefully.

In this coast of India there are some hopes affoarded of better att least more reputable success,[17] if the newes be true that arrived lately before my departure, the Mogull is inclined to be kind to ye English, he haveing declared when he was inform'd that they had deserted their Factory in Suratt for the ill usage they had from ye severall Govern[ou]r of that place, and plenary restitution should be made them for what had been taken from them by any injust and indirect meanes, and that they should enjoy the same liberties, priviledges and immunities that were granted them by his father Sha Jehan and his anncestors, and for many yeares after he himselfe was settled on ye present throne enjoyed, he haveing sent a greate Omraw Muctier Can, whose daughter was given in marriage to his youngest sonne Caime Bux haft Hazary of 7000 horse who is going to be Suba of Ahmahdavad, haveing Cambaia, Baroach and Suratt under his jurisdiction to examine and compose those differences and distractions w[hi]ch argueth some probability because of its consonancy w[i]th all ye Suratt merchants wishes and desires, the principallest of them being you to courte to make theire complaints knowne to the King against ye Governours through whose prodigious avarice the Porte is reduced to the present miserable circumstances t'is now involved.

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Before the merchants resolved to goe, they consultted seriously of whome to complaine, of the English or the Governours, and concluded all unanimously (Seid Idrous being theire oratour and chiefest of them) by all meanes of the former governours, viz Cartulub Can, Salabut Can,

17 The peace of 1690 was more humiliating.

and Muttamer Can for they considered that if they complained of the English who lately, seized on most of theire ships it might so farr incense and exasperate ye Mogull ag[ains]t us, as that might cause him to send a strong Army to Bombay, and if he should take it (w[hi]ch. he might easily doe) considering how ill t'is fortified and the paucity of men wee have to defend it (these haveing been a greate mortallity of late among them) and England a farr off to be recruited upon occasion, yet it would no way benefitt them, but rather to ye contrary prejudice them, as they would never expect to have any free commerce nor theire ships to navigate ye Indian seas but ours would reprize them.

The Mogull is now upon his march towards Ahmudnagger a very strong place on an eminency w[hi]ch he tooke some yeares since from a Princess called Chan Bibbie[18] much celebrated by these orientall nations for defending her castle and person w[i]th silver bullets and balls instead of iron and leadon ones, and takeing off of a cup of poyson rather than fall into ye hands of her enemy alive, it lieth not above ten daies off of Bombay where he intends to make his rendezvous, till he hath an absolute conquest Concan and Sombajee Rajah his countries, and captivated him also w[hi]ch will be easily compassed now, haveing already reduced his confederates to obedience, all whome he will without all doubt send to Goalior[19] w[hi]ch will be theire ultimate habitation in this world, where that mortall and intoxicating drinke of Post will be given them, if not beheaded.

While Orangsha was busie with ye siedges Golcundah his third sonne Sultan Eckbar imbarqued himselfe in Aprill last att Rajapore[20] for Mascutt where he arrived safely; This Prince had not long rested there before the Emon[21]

18 Chand Bibi.

19 Neither Sikandar nor Abul Hasan was imprisoned at Gwalior.

20 Akbar sailed from Rajpur in October 1686.

21 Imam.

of yt Porte of Arabia (Sultan Benell Arab) shewed himselfe a second Prusias King of Bythinia who betrayed Hanniball to the Romans haveing sought his protection; This perfidious Prince ye Arab haveing secretly bargained w[i]th ye Mogull Orangsha to deliver him up his sonne for

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five lacks of rupees (a lack is fivety thousand dollars) w[hi]ch the young prince haveing notice of, adviced immediately Sha Soliman Emperour of Persia thereof, who presently upon receipt of his letter dispatched a Can to the Arab Prince with menacing missives, that if he offered the s[ai]d prince the least disgust, and did not permitt him to come freely and without the least molestation he would certainely send an Army to destory him and his country, which proved of so greate a terrour and influence, as to suffer him depart peaceably, he arrived and disimbarqued att mino[22] neare unto Assine, where he was so honourably reiceived by the Can and Shabunder[23], who by the King of Persia theire masters express commands, both walked on foote by him takeing hold of ye stirrups till he was brought to the garden doore where he lighted from whence to ye roome yt was prepared for his reception ye ground was spread with rich Zerbafts (Zerbaft is a cloth of all gold or silver) on which he and all yt followed him treaded, after he had refreshed himselfe a while there, he was attended to Gombroone[24], where was sett before him twenty five thousand Tomans of gold, (a Persian toman is sterling 3 £ 6s. 8d) fourteen stately horses with gold trappings all sett with precious stones to be lead in state, 300 horses besides and 1500 Georgian and Sircassian slaves for service and for his accommodation on the way to Spahan[25] ye Royal citty of that Empire the rich tent which was Sha Tamas, and used afterwards by Sha Abbas

22 Probably Minau, to the east of Bundur Abbas.

23 Harbour Master.

24 Modern Bundur Abbas.

25 Ispahan.

which is allwaies kept in the Cassana[26] or Treasury appointed him, haveing reposed a few daies here; where he was complemented by the English, French and Dutch, he marched away for Laar[27] where he was mett and wellcomed att suitable state and respect by divers Cans and 15000 Cuzelbashes all horsemen and some Cans of the prime rank within a few daies after removed thence to Shiraz where he was expected and receaved also w[i]th no less state then before by as many greate personages and Cuzelbushes who conducted and waited upon him to Spahan,[28] where and how he was received and cushamudied or wellcomed. Your Ma[jes]tie may guses by the Persians naturall propension to magnificence and greateness. he never lighted off his horse to goe into any garden all the way he went and travelled up to Spahan but Zerbaft were spread for him to tread upon, he is so much honoured and esteemed by Shah Soliman as that t'is verily believed that he will give a considerable succour to enter into Hyndostan w[hi]ch

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he may easily doe, by way of Kandehar and arrive to sitt on the throne of that vast Empire, all ye Rasputts and many angry discontented Omraws being for him.

The Portugueses, after yt Don Manosel Lobo de Sylveira was displaced for his ill conduct of warr with Sombajee Rajah and Joseph de Mello de Castro chose in his roome of Capt Generall of the north, soone retooke Carenjah[29] and beat out ye enemy, they also mett with good success on the coast of Melinda the last Montzoon,[30] makeing themselves masters of Pather whither they sent four frigotto and a Galiote w[i]th severall families to repeople it, and about two

26 Khazana.

27 About 150 miles to the west of Bunder Abbas.

28 He reached Ispahan in January 1688, after St. John had already embarked for England.

29 September 1684.

30 Monsoon.

months since they repossessed themselves of the strong eminency of Asserine; w[hi]ch they did partly through confederacy partly by force of armes and stratagems it being a place not to be taken by force onely, forty vigilant men in it, being enough to defend and keepe it against 4000, this has so farr enraged Sombagee Rajah as that he thereatneth to lay seidge to Chaule and Baccaim, but the Rajah is so full freighted with carefull thoughts now that Orangsha hath subjugated his confederates and is marching against him, that he is not in a capacitie hardly to defend himselfe much less warr upon an enemy.

When I wrote thus farr a letter was brought me to peruse lately brought me from ye Mogull's camp of the beginning of December last by one Bowanidas a Nagger Brahmen, directed to Volubvenidas[31] a late Farmer of ye island Bombay, who adviseth that the Mogull is resolved to take Sombajee Rajah alive and because he should not escape him by flying to the Portuguese Countrey for protection, he would lay seidge and take theire countrey first; making himselfe (like a subtle Politician) ignorant of the greate enmity between them, w[hi]ch evidently manifesteth his implacable aversion to all Christians, tho ye Portuguese did from theire first establishment in India most seriously and industriously courte the Mogull's amitie never giveing but alwaies avoideing the least offence of theire parte, and if they have suffered of late and lossed a greate part of theire countrey w[hi]ch Sombajee Rajah tooke and destroyed, it was out of respect and pleasure to serve and gratifie ye Mogull by suffering his Army to pass through it when it marched to Calian where Ranmast Can his Generall intrenched himselfe and kept his rendezvous till his master commanded him away againe, besides they well knowing what a potent and formidable Prince in

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Asia he is, theire chiefest study was alwaies to preserve a faire

31 Vallab Venidas was the farmer of customs at Bombay.

and amicable correspondence with him which was no unadvised policy.

The said Nagger Brahmen being a very intimate friend of Volubvenidas heartily wisheth and beseecheth him not to stay any longer on Bombay, but gett himselfe and his family off of the Island, and secure whatever he hath in Suratt or some other place for the Mogull was much incensed ag[ains]t the English for seizing his subjects ships and committing many exorbitances in Bengala, so that unless ye merchants who are gon to court doe appease him, wee must expect that he will send greate power ag[ains]t us, and besiedge very straitely both by land and sea, his navall armada being in a readiness to sett out expecting a very considerable Fleete of Arabs of Mascatt consisting of 15 sailes some very stoute ships with good Europe Artillery supplyed by the Interlopers and very full of men very dextrous att small shott, which I have reason to suspect may joyne with the Mogulls, either by confederacy, taken up upon service or upon hire.[32]

Matters standing thus between us and so potent a Monarch (the greatest that ever wore a Diadem of Hyndostan since ye reigne of Tamerlen, whence all the Mogulls are lineally descended, and England att so vast a distance for present succour, it behooveth those who have ye management of those weighty and nationall affaires (to whom I heartily wish a happy progress and conclusion) to peice ye Fox's taile to the Lyon's skin, and avoide haveing too many irons in the fire att once, because Gen[era]ll Child already hath disobliged ye Portuguese French and Dutch, since this rupture w[i]th the Mogull as your Ma(jes)tie shall understand att leasure, more particularly from the King of Portugall. I doe in all submissive humbleness crave leave to be silent in all occurrences relating to the East India Company and theire servants till I have the honour of attending your

32 Sir G. Campbell writes: "In fact such was the defenceless state of the island that the conquest of it was prevented more by the jealousy of Mukhtyar Khan of the influence which the reduction of it would have given to the Sidi than by the power of the garrison to defend it."

Ma[jes]ties p[er]sonally to satisfie you in your princely wisdome with all such matters in my bounden duty as fell within the compass of my charge and with the manner of theire usage and carriage to myselfe in the quality of your judge by a speciall commission under the greate Seale of England which they presumed to supersede the nineth of September last to the amazement of all European and Easterne nations, giveing me a discharge in writeing, and telling me I must be maintained from that day by your Ma[jes]tie or myselfe, if I tarried any longer then the first conveyance presented for Europe, S[i]r John Child already alleadgeing a new dispoticall soveraigne power invested in him over all your Ma[jes]ties subjects in India, with whome in sundry weighty occurrences I could not

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runn beyond my commission judgem[en]t and conscience as a toole to serve turne ag[ains]t his late Ma[jes]ties Royall and righteous commands and directions att the bare will and arbitrary pleasure of S[i]r John Child without and against all lawes, w[hi]ch with all circumstances will be layd open to your sacred Ma[jes]tie by Persons of approved integritie neare your Royall Person with w[hi]ch I shall not presume to burthen att present, thus onely that I had patiently borne w[i]th all extreamities and pressures of my owne in that painefull, hazardous, and ingratefull service, till I receaved your Ma[jes]ties express directions, w[hi]ch out of imploy and meanes among strangers nay my avow'd enemies was altogether impossible for me to accomplish and if true devotion to your Ma[jes]ties service and my ever bounden duty had suffered my inclinations to come to a resolution, I had chose undergoe the greatest extreamities in this world, then strugle any longer to preserve the inestimable peace of conscience under the unconditionale, unbounded authoritie of the said Company and theire servants, as exercised and practiced by them, w[hi]ch I was under most impulsive necessitie to observe with teares, in my last yeares dispatches to his Grace of Canterbury under this title of Y[ou]r Ma[jes]ties preroga-

tive offended defended, but since they proceeded a mâlo âd peius and I have cause to thank God to be thus delivered from theire warr and strife, as well as theire unnaturall animosities among themselves who cannot endure any concurrent jurisdiction from Y[ou]r Ma[jes]tie but what solely invested in themselves, witness the inhuman usages of Capt John Tyrrell, S[i]r John Wyborne,[33] and myselfe, whom I despaire not God will save from the striveing of unruly People, whose mouth speaketh proud words and theire right hand is a right hand of iniquitie.

In case the Mogull be mollified or influenced by the sollicitations of the merchants that are gon to petition him, it will be happy, and if not wee must expect never to enjoy any peace quietness, or any manner of commerce in India so long as he liveth, this is clearly my opinion, for whither there be any trade in his countrey or no brought by sea he valueth it not, for what is 20 or 25 lacks of rupees to him, w[hi]ch the customes of Suratt, Bengala and Broach and Cambaya may importe to yearely, a matter very inconsiderable to his vast Revenue, and there will not be Armenians, Turks and other merchants wanting that will find out waies (as formerly) to supply the trade by land, I say little of the politique Dutch, who all this while sitt still lookeing on how the game is played, who, I dare say are not a little joyfull to see these distractions, who time will manifest, will in ye conclusion interest and convenience, and supply Europe sufficiently with all these countrey commodities, as for the French they are not so considerable tho it may animate them much to increase their commerce, the last letters which came from Pundicherry (where theire Principall Factory is now) advice that there were six frigatts men of warr arrived at Syam

33 Capt. Tyrell was guilty of insolence towards St. John on one occasion. Child interfered with the judicial work of Wyborne and subsequently dismissed him. Tyrell's recommendation, probably as a juryman, was rejected by Child.

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of theire Kings with an Embassadour and upwards 1000 men with greate quantity of powder, armes, Artillery small and greate, morter pieces, granadoes etc., ammunition, what theire designe is, as yett is not certainly knowne, but suspected that they intend to goe and possess themselves of Tenassry and settle there, w[hi]ch if they compass, will prove of very bad consequence to other nations, especially those that inhabit the coast of Cormandell, who are alwaies supplied with rice from thence, besides t'is a countrey yielding plenty of most excellent straite masts and timber for building of ships, and in all seasons of the yeare a second Bay of Bombay, the situation of the place is so strong by nature that with a little arte added to it, there may be erected inexpugnable fortifications but it is believed the politique Dutch will be vigilant enough over them to overthrow theire designe.

On the 29th December last arrived in Bombay road a small ship belonging to Generall Child, called ye Casar from Forte St George w[hi]ch brought newes of a greate tempest that hapned on that coaste wherein were upwards of 40 ships lossed, that, where of young Goodlad was commander being also ship wrecked, this escaped by letting its cable slip and putting to Sea yett nevertheless was forced to cutt his maine mast by the bord.

The Resolution arrived safe there three daies after the storme, all the Portuguese who lived under the English att Fort St George are removed thence to St Thome apprehensive that the Mogull will send an army downe to besiedge it, there hath been a greate mortality in Bengala and ye coast of Cormandell among the English French Portuguese and Dutch besides the countrey people among whome a violent Famine still continueth w[hi]ch will be our case also on this Coaste if there is not an accommodation concluded between us and Orangsha for all manner of provisions are not onely scarce, but most excessive deare already.

There arrived 2 messus[34] or foote messengers from

34 Probably a corruption of *jasud*.

Suratt w[i]th letters to ye Generall from. Mr. Harris and Annesley att Suratt w[hi]ch advice the new Gov[ernou]r Muctier Can haveing shewed himself very civill to them with many promises to intercede with his master very effectually for the English and att theire takeing Congee of him. he presented Mr. Harris the Chiefe with a horse and a rich Serpa,. (Serpa is a rich garment) and to the Company's Brokers Kisso and Vittall Parracke each a Serpa, he did much insist on the Generall's returne to Suratt w[hi]ch is w[ha]t the Moores aime att, but he will avoide that snare for in my opinion it will not be safe for him to approach ye place againe without the Mogulls Firman secureing him and the Company's effects and affaires from all violences whatsoever

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and also theire former priviledges, immunities and stipulations w[hi]ch they enjoyed in Sha Jahans Reigne reconfirmed. But I looke on those proceedings for no better then meere formalities, neither indeed shall wee really know what to depend upon, or trust unto till the merchants that are gon to courte have theire ultimate answer from the King.

In a vessell that was lately brought into Bombay harbour lately reprized att Suratt rivers mouth by our ships that have blocked up that Porte was ye successour to an Embassadour who was sent from Sha Soliman, to the King of Syam and inquireing what the importe of his embassy was, could not gather from my informers that it was to any other end then to maintaine a firme and amicable correspondence w[i]th each other.

In a paper inclosed your Ma[jes]tie shall find an exact accompt of ye yearely Revenue of your Island Bombay as farmed in 86, not farmed out since in regard the Compa[ny] inhanced the customes from 3 p. c. to 5 p. cent and keepe them in their owne hands, the Company still complaine of theire charges, but your Ma[jes]tie may discerne the truth w[hi]ch walked in the darke hitherto.

Thus farr I proceeded in my intelligence on Bombay

w[hi]ch I had ready to be forwarded in the ship I intended to imbarque in for Europe, in case ye Generall would att ye last lay some impediment in my way w[hi]ch he most industriously laboured to doe after his wonted sinister practices, the 12th of January being imbarqued in the good ship Success, wee tooke our departure from that Porte and the 20th Aprill following arrived att St. Helena roade where I receaved this following intelligence from a French Man of Warr[35].

* * * *

Thus I have in all submissive humbleness and duty made bold to represent those occurrences to your sacred Ma[jes]tie with as much persepecuity integritie and candour, as my weake understanding would serve me presumeing on your Ma[jes]ties knowne zeale for ye true wellfare of your subjects and gracious disposition towards him who in his bounden duty fidelity, and best endeavours shall ever be zealous and ready to approve himselfe.

Your most sacred Ma[jes]ties
most humble, obdt and faithfull
subject and servant

From bord ship Success J. St. J.
the E Channell 18 July 1688/S. V.

35 Here follows an account of French activities in Siam.

The Story of a Trading Boat, 1793*.

The log book forms but a colourless record of a ship's journey—if the journey happens to be without any exciting event. But in the 'good old days' a brave sailor was not wasted for lack of adventures in the eastern waters. The freedom of the sea was yet unknown and the merchant nations of the West were free to fight each other without any let or hindrance once they were outside the lawful limits of the Christendom. The corsairs had a merry time and carried on their nefarious trade in defiance of God and man. The log books of the East India men therefore were neither dull nor dry and often furnish first rate materials for contemporary history and romance as well. Unfortunately the log books of Indian boats, if they were ever kept, have not come down to us. What thrilling tales they might have told us of unexpected encounters with the Malabar pirates, of the daring exploits of the Portuguese armada and the much valiant deeds of the Angria brothers! Even in the last decade of the eighteenth century a coasting barque engaged in peaceful traffic had its moments of anxiety and apprehension as we learn, not from a ship's log but from a captain's correspondence.

Andre Bartolomeos Da Cruz was the Captain and Supercargo of a small *ghurab*[1] in the service of His Majesty

*The paper is based on a series of twelve Portuguese letters preserved in the Cochin Records Office. An English translation of the entire series has been appended at the end of the article. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Government of Cochin for their permission to utilise this very interesting correspondence.

1 From Arabic 'ghorab' meaning 'galley'. The word was later corrupted into 'Grab'. In *Les Hindous*, Vol. I (by Solvyn) it is described as a ship with three masts, a sharp prow and a bowsprit. The name 'is constantly mentioned in the sea—and river-fights of India from the arrival of the Portuguese down to near the end of the 18th century'. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 391, Col. 2).

the King of Cochin. His surname offers but an uncertain clue to his origin and ancestry, for Christians of the Malabar readily assumed Portuguese names; his letters indeed were written in Portuguese but it formed in those days the *lingua franca* of the coast. In 1793 Da Cruz was sent on a commercial cruise to the ports of Ceylon and the east coast of India. His correspondence unfortunately is incomplete, some of his letters and all but one of the replies have been lost. The first of the series, as it now stands, opens dramatically with the announcement of the war that had broken in Europe early that year (1st. February, 1793). It was written from Nagapatam on the 2nd of June. At 4 in the evening that day Da Cruz had cast anchor in the harbour after a voyage of twelve days. On his way from Trincomali he had encountered inclement weather, but ill winds caused him little concern and it was a news of worse import that weighed heavily on his mind. While off Puliadivo[2] on the Ceylon coast a salvo from a British fighting frigate bade him stop. The Captain enquired about his destination and the port of his origin and warned him that the English and the Dutch were at war with the French. Luckily he had not come across any French boat so far and the first thing he did on his arrival at Nagapatam was to hurry to Nagore, four miles off, and see the English Resident for whom he had brought a letter of recommendation and to communicate to him the disquieting news. But neither Mr Mitchell, the Resident, nor the rest of the local gentry on whom the Captain had occasion to call gave his report any credence. None the less he considered it his duty to acquaint his principal, the prime minister of Cochin, with what he had heard and a brief note was accordingly sent to him.

The next letter was dated the 5th of June. There was no longer any doubt about the war. The news had been

2 Evidently a slip for 'Moeletivoe' ('Mullaittivo'), a port on the east coast of Ceylon, nearly 50 miles to the north of Trincomali.

confirmed from Madras[3] and the Resident had hurriedly left Nagapatam with all his armed retinue. Da Cruz had not been invested with plenary power to take the measures that the emergency demanded. He suggested that the Danish flag should be hoisted at once and a Captain of the same domicile should be appointed to disarm all suspicions about the nationality of the ship. A prompt decision was needed and he solicited an early reply. Meanwhile he would, he added, negotiate for a Danish passport that would secure for his boat and cargo a neutral status and the immunity it implied.

We next find Da Cruz at the Danish settlement of Tranquebar. It was only eighteen miles to the north of Nagapatam and he spent the next ten weeks between these two ports. Mr Mitchel himself had taken the precaution of furnishing his own boat with Danish pass and colours and the example of the English official had been emulated by the Captains of four French merchantmen. Da Cruz learns that the Cochin flag would be of little avail if he met a French frigate on the high seas and prudence demanded that he should henceforth sail under a Danish flag and carry on his business in the name of a Danish subject. The employment of a Danish Captain as a security measure was likely to prove expensive, as one gentleman had demanded a monthly salary of one hundred and fifty rupees. Events were moving fast. In a postscript to his third letter (dated Tranquebar, the 10th June, 1793) Da Cruz added that "to-day the English gentlemen have taken Karikal."[4] This small French settlement was within

3 Da Cruz was told that war had been declared in Europe on the 14th March. The correct date is the 1st February, 1793. The formal notice from the English Consul at Alexandria was brought to Madras by the Cruiser *Drake* on the 1st June (George Baldwin to Margotty, Commander of the *Drake* at Alexandria, 10th April, 1793—*Secret Cons.*, 11th June, 1793, no. 4. Fort St. George Govt. to Governor-General-in-Council, dated 1st June—*Secret Cons.*, 11th June, 1793, no. 1).

4 The capture of Karikal is thus reported by William Mitchel, the Resident of Nagore and Nagapatam, in his letter dated Karikal, 10th June, 1793,

a few miles of Nagapatam and Nagore—and was not in a position to offer any effective defence.

By the 5th of the next month Da Cruz was once again at Nagapatam. The *ghurab* meanwhile had changed its name and nationality. It was henceforth *Denmarca* of Copenhagen, commanded by Jhan Pascal, a citizen of Tranquebar. He was engaged on a salary of forty rupees per mensem with free boarding and lodging besides an additional sum of forty rupees for his passage back. He was also permitted to dispose of twenty bags of merchandise in the port of disembarkation. Through the good offices of Mr Mitchell, Resident of Nagore and Nagapatam, a part of the cargo had been sold in the name of Jacob Edward Colbiorson, second of the Tranquebar Council, and a sum of three hundred six pagodas[5] and two fanams was paid in duties. The King of Cochin doubtless expected a fair profit from his investment but the prospects now seemed far from bright. Da Cruz had certainly not counted for the heavy expenses he had to meet at Tranquebar but he expected to be recompensed by the prospective freighters for this unforeseen charges. In case the Cochin authorities did not approve of freighting he

to the Fort St. George Government.: "In consequence of the French having embarked with all their force and on information that a large quantity of grain belonging to individuals was intending to be conveyed from hence to Pondichery, I left Nagore in the night with fifty invalids and a small fieldpiece ....and entered the town soon after Day light when Mons Imbaud invited to give up the place at the first summons delivered over the Town and Districts to the Hon'ble Company". (*Pol. Cons.*, 28th June, 1793, no. 16).

5 It appears that coins of various types and weights were long current in South India under this name. Prinsep gives a list of no less than 34 varieties in his *Useful Tables* (Vol. I, p. 40) and it is difficult to assess the value of this coin in terms of modern currency without knowing the place of its issue. Accounts in Madras were kept till 1818 in Pagodas, fanams and Kas (80 kas = 1 fanam. 42 fanams = 1 pagoda), each pagoda being valued at 7s. 5½d. The word 'fanam', according to Prinsep, is derived from Sanskrit 'panam'. The rate of exchange of the coin fluctuated from 35 to 45 fanams per pagoda (Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 16). In 1823 one Madras pagoda equalled 34 Tranquebar fanams (Thrornton, *East India Calculator*, p. 495).

would have to take a cargo of areca as ballast and as the prevailing price was still good he might thereby be able to make good the loss. But the market showed signs of increasing uncertainty and the price level steadily sank. The war was going against the French. Not only Karikal but another village which Da Cruz called Henom (Yanam)[6] were captured by the English and there was a rumour that a French boat from Mauritius had also been seized.[7]

On the 17th August Da Cruz was still at Tranquebar. The Cochin authorities apparently did not like that any part of the cargo should be sold at Nagapatam. The Captain naturally felt hurt at this undeserved lack of confidence in his discretion. Profit, he knew, was now out of the question. He was trying his best to cut down the inevitable loss. He was therefore anxiously watching the market and carefully examining the quotations from Madras and Calcutta. Sugar he would have to sell either at Nagapatam or Madras, for Bengal produced an abundance of that commodity and it would be foolish to transport sugar where it was not wanted. There was a demand for areca at Calcutta but the "Chiquiny areca"[8], which formed part of his cargo, was not liked in Bengal. He would therefore sell his areca at Madras, if possible, and carry it to Bengal only if he had no other alternative.

The military news is not without interest. A French

6 (French, *Yanaon*. French Settlement in the Godavari District, Madras Presidency, 16° 44′ N., 82° 13′ E.). The place surrendered to the English on 11th June, 1793 (Major Wynch to Chief and Council of Masulipatam, dated 12th June—Pol. Cons., 5th July, 1793, no. 15).

7 The reference probably is to the *Nestor* Snow which was taken possession of by the Chief and Council at Vizagapatam on June 8, 1793. (Chief and Council at Vizagapatam to Fort St. George Govt., dated 11th June, 1793—Pol. Cons., 5th July, 1793, no. 16).

8 Is it the same as the variety known as *Chiki* in Bengal? The term is explained as a harsh and disagreeable variety of betelnut by William Carey in his *Dictionary of the Bengali Language*. The unpopularity of the commodity is also testified to by a well-known Bengali nursery rhyme.

frigate, *La Gibele*,[9] Captain Magan, was at Tranquebar for a day only. It was well armed and had a fairly strong fighting force (Negroes are specially mentioned) on board. For twelve days *La Gibele* had been cruising along the short coast line from Tranquebar to Nagapatam but she had no prospect of reaching Pondicherry "as that port is watched by the English fleet consisting of three Company's ships armed for fighting and Commodore Cornwallis's frigate." Da Cruz seems to have been accurately informed in this respect, for it is substantially corroborated by the Governor-General who wrote to the Court on the 1st August, 1793[10]: "The Government of Madras immediately commenced the necessary preparations for the siege of Pondicherry where Colonel Floyd with a large detachment arrived on the 11th July to blockade it on the landside, while the Commodore with His Majesty's frigate the *Minerva* and three of your China ships 'Triton', 'Warley' and 'Royal Charlotte' are engaged to prevant supplies from being imported by sea, and the factories of Karikal, and Yanam have been taken possession of by the officers of the Madras Government."

Despite their undoubted superiority at the sea the British authorities were not inclined to hurt unnecessarily the susceptibilities of weak neutrals. Da Cruz writes, "The boat of a French Captain that had taken Danish flag and passport

9 Probably a slip for 'La Sibylle' (or 'Sybile'), a French frigate with 40/44" guns (Pol. Letter to Court, dated 1st August, 1793). *La Sibylle* was at the offing from Tranquebar on the 13th July. She 'sent a boat ashore but did not anchor'. The next morning the vessel was sighted by Commodore Cornwallis off Pondichery. On being chased by him she stood out to sea and made her next appearance at the offing from Karikal on the 15th July. Commodore Cornwallis cruised as far as Tranquebar in her quest, but she again succceded in eluding him. (W. Cornwallis to Fort St. George Govt., dated 15th July, and *ditto* to Kenworthy, dated 19th July—Pol. Cons., 15th July, 1793, no. 12, and 9th August, 1793, no. 27).

10 Pol. Letter to Court, dated 1st August, 1793. Relevant extracts from the letter will be found in Ross's *Cornwallis Correspondence*, Vol. II, but there the names of the ships have been misspelt.

in the name of Mr. Pingel who is now Captain was arrested at Madras but was released by letters that went from Tranquebar." Apparently the British in India were not disposed to treat the French menace in the Indian Ocean as really serious and the abuse of the Danish flag[11] was ignored with uncommon good humour.

On the 14th of August Tranquebar had a heavy rainfall. The main thoroughfares were under four feet of water. If the rain had continued for a few hours longer the settlement would have suffered considerable damage. Da Cruz left the Danish port soon afterwards and reported his arrival at Madras in a letter dated the 22nd August which however has been lost. Probably he did not touch at Nagapatam and Tranquebar on his voyage home.

On the 13th September Da Cruz wrote from Madras that he was leaving for Bengal that very day. He had disposed of the areca he had without waiting for orders, for he was convinced that it would be more profitable to take 1000 bags of rice instead of 300 *fardos*[12] (measures) of areca. The most interesting information that we find in this letter is about the exchange rate then current. In Bengal 330 Arcot [13] rupees would fetch 100 pagodas. Da Cruz therefore had credit for 21,546 Rs. from Messrs Porcher and Redhead of Madras at the rate of Rs. 350 per 100[14] pagodas. The exchange rate of Pataca[15] was 10 pagodas and $15\frac{7}{8}$ dollars per pataca.

11 *Cf.* "The Danes at Tranquebar are in the habit of granting passports for a certain premium to all French Ships."—Resident at Cuddalore to Fort St. George Govt., dated 19th July, 1793 (Pol., Cons., 9th August, 1793, no. 26).

12 A cubic measure of dry and liquid things, roughly equivalent to 6 gallons 1800 pounds. (Vide Sen, *Early Career of Kanhoji Angria and Other Papers*, pp. 89, 93).

13 So called because the rupee at Madras was originally that of the Nawab of Arcot. We have it on the authority of Prinsep that the Arcot rupees were at one time current in the districts of Chittagong and Dacca. (*Useful Tables*, Vol. I, p. 20, and also Beveridge, *Bakarganj*, p. 99).

14 It is interesting to note that this was the ratio officially fixed by the Proclamation of 7th January, 1818 (Prinsep, *op. cit.*, p. 16).

15 Certainly not the silver coin of the same name issued by the Spanish

Busy as he was making arrangements for his voyage to Calcutta, Da Cruz did not omit to impart the political news that might interest his correspondent. "The only news that I can give your Lordship is that Lord Cornwallis arrived at Madras on the 7th instant, also General Abercromby[16] has arrived from Bombay on the 1st of September. Mr. Pony arrived and Pondichery was captured on the 22nd ultimo and all the French prisoners have been brought to Madras but it is said that better order prevails at Pondichery now than previously". Here we find some slight inaccuracies about the dates—Cornwallis had indeed arrived at Madras on the 7th September and embarked for England on the 10th (on the Swallow Packet[17]) October, but Pondichery capitulated on the 23rd and not on the 22nd August[18]. It may be safely presumed that "better order prevailed" at Pondichery after the British occupation for Lord Cornwallis says that "the licentiousness and insubordination of the soldiers of the garrison had forced the Governor of Pondichery, after a fire of only a few hours from our first batteries......to surrender by capitulation."[19]

The first two letters that Da Cruz wrote from Calcutta

and Portuguese Governments worth about 4s. 8d. Logan refers to a coin called 'gold pattak' worth a ducat in his *Malabar* (I, p. 329). But equating 'Pattak' with the 'Pataca' of Da Cruz does not entirely solve our difficulty, because a ducat (9½ shillings) could hardly equal 10 pagodas (80 shillings in Madras) or 15⅞ dollars in value.

16 Sir Robert Abercromby (1740-1827), Governor of Bombay and Commander-in-Chief there from 10th January, 1790, to August, 1793, when he proceeded to Madras on duty. Thence he joined the Supreme Council as Commander-in-Chief in India (28th Oct., 1793)—Buckland, *Dictionary of Indian Biography*. I. R. D., *List of the Heads of Administration*.

17 Cornwallis to Court, dated Fort St. George, Sept. 18, 1793. (Ross, *Cornwallis Correspondence*, II, p. 226).

18 The English occupation of Pondichery took place at 9 a.m. on the 23rd August (Pol. Cons., 9th Sept., 1793, no. 5) but hostilities had ceased and the French authorities had offered to capitulate on the 22nd August though the capitulation was accepted by the English on the day following. (Pol. Cons., 9th Sept., 1793, no. 8, 9).

19 Cornwallis to Court (Ross, *op. cit.*, II, p. 226).

are missing. That dated the 2nd November refers to the uncertainties of the market and the rumoured presence of the French frigates and corsairs on the east coast. Da Cruz was reliably informed that Lord Cornwallis had left for home on the 10th October and Sir John Shore, his successor, took charge of the Government of Calcutta on the 26th. While the first date is quite accurate, the second anticipates the event by two days[20]. It is really surprising that a person of Da Cruz's inquisitiveness should be wrongly informed about an event of such public importance, while he was actually at Calcutta.

Da Cruz was now confronted with an unexpected difficulty. The only cargo that he could lade at Calcutta was rice which he intended to sell at Galle or Colombo in Ceylon. That island, it appears, depended on imported rice even in the closing years of the eighteenth century. It was at that date a Dutch colony and the Dutch were the allies of the British. But the English would not permit even a neutral ship to touch at any port except their own and the export and sale of rice in foreign colonies were strictly interdicted. Da Cruz would of course be allowed to carry rice to Cochin but in that case the King his master would have to certify that cargo had actually been unladen at that port. Da Cruz was in a dilemma. He was prepared to give the undertaking demanded by the Calcutta Government and if the King so required he would not later hesitate to break his pledge and visit the ports of Ceylon. But he wanted the written instructions of the King, no doubt to safeguard himself against any subsequent charge of indiscretion. Meanwhile French boats were reported at Balasore and a siren warned all merchantmen about the risk of leaving the harbour (23rd November, 1793). Da Cruz had previously decided to sail under an escort of six armed boats but his business was not finished as yet.

20 Cornwallis to Hay, dated 10th Oct., 1793 (Pub. Cons., 28th Oct., 1793, no. 1). Robert Clerke to Hay, 10th Oct., 1793 (*Ibid*, no. 2 and Public Progs., 28th Oct., 1793, p. 2085).

On the 28th November Da Cruz wrote to the prime minister that he had to execute a bond for forty-nine thousand rupees undertaking not to sell rice in ports other than that of Cochin and to furnish satisfactory evidence of his cargo being unloaded at that port. It took him another month to complete his purchases and the *Ghurab* left for Ceylon on the last day of the year. The King of Cochin, as we learn from his prime minister's letter (dated Cochin, 31st December, 1793), cared more for his profit than for the plighted word of his agent. Da Cruz was directed to sell all his rice in the ports of Ceylon contrary to the terms of the bond he had executed. He was expected to take every care that this breach of faith might go unnoticed. Whether he should bring cash or take a fresh cargo likely to find a sale at Cochin was left entirely to his discretion.

Thus concludes this interesting correspondence. When the voyage originally started and how it ended we do not know but one can very well imagine that Captain Da Cruz knew little peace since he came to hear of the European war and his anxiety continued unabated till he reached the safety of the home waters. Though the false colours under which he sailed afforded sufficient security against French aggression, every strange mast in the distant horizon must have caused a flutter in his guilty heart.

DA CRUZ CORRESPONDENCE

1.

Most Excellent Sir,

I (beg to) inform you that today at 4 in the evening we cast anchor in this port after a voyage of 12 days. We had however bad weather after Trincomali, but by the grace of God we are at last quite well now. When we were off Puliadivo in the island of Ceylon, a small English fighting frigate of two masts, much bigger than our boat, followed behind. After firing a shot from a mortar and arriving at a short distance, the Captain enquired whether I had encoun-

tered French ships, where the Gurap came from and to whom it belonged. After being informed of everything he said that good care should be taken as the Dutch and the French were at war and might be coming this way. Immediately after landing I went to Nagore to see Mr. Michel Esq. [*sic*] the Resident (delivered the recommendation letter communicating all news) as well as other gentlemen. All of them say, there is no certainty, but nevertheless I deemed it well (to inform), because your Lordship may pick up more information in this respect and I may be directed in other particulars according to your Lordship's pleasure, in case I have to do something.

Hope that your Lordship in his benign kindness will communicate all this to His Majesty[21] with the respect of his servant.

A. B. Da Cruz,
Nagapatam, 2 June, 1793.

2.

To

Most Excellency Senhor Govinda Menon,
Prime Minister of His Majesty, Cochin.

Most Excellent Senhor,

The news of my arrival and other things may have been learnt by Your Lordship from the letter of 2nd of the current month. However, as it happened on another occasion the news of the war of the English and the Dutch against the French and of the French against those (is confirmed) by a letter that has been received from Madras and Mr. Michel Esq., Resident, left Nagore and Nagapatam[22] on the night of

21 Raja Rama Varma (1791-1805). He owned a number of coasting vessels commanded by European captains and carried on a brisk trade with all the ports from Bombay to Masulipatam. (*Cochin State Manual*, p. 133).

22 The corresponding text in the original makes no sense. A literal translation of the passage would read "a letter that has been received (Mr. Michel Esq., Resident) from Madras and left Nagore etc."

of the 4th with caution and all soldiers under arms. It is said that the news of the war has been published with the arrival of the Dreack[23] at Madras with packets brought from Bombay by way of (?)[24] and that the war was declared on the 14th March last, but I think it is the same ship Dreack that gave us information at Onor[25]. On account of the news current here I do not know what we should do. Your Lordship should direct me whether we should take Danish banner in support of which it will be necessary to take a (Danish) Captain (paying his salary and perquisites) and to take a passport in the name of a citizen of the same flag instead of the banner of our king. I expect all this will be quickly disposed of with directions about how I should act and work in this respect.

After communicating to His Majesty, Your Lordship should instruct this servant; before receiving the reply I shall have to make efforts about the flag and passport for which prolonged negotiation will be necessary.

The devoted servant etc.
A. B. Da Cruz
Nagapatam, 5 June, 1793
quarter night.

P. S. Send letters in Portuguese in case the precaution of changing the flag and taking a captain should be neccssary.

23 Read 'Drake'. The *Drake* Cruiser left Bombay sometime in March and reached Suez on 5th of April. It was here that she received the news of European war transmitted by the English Consul at Alexandria. She reached Madras on 1st June and Calcutta on the 11th. (Secret Cons., 11th June, 1793, no. 2, 4).

24 Should probably read 'by way of Suez'.

25 Also called 'Honavar'—historic town and port in the North Canara district in Bombay. The meeting between the Ghurab and the Cruiser alluded to evidently took place when the latter was on her way to Suez from Bombay (*i.e.*, sometime in March).

3.

Most Excellent Sir,

Your Lordship will have ere now learnt the news of the war already written in two letters. Four French boats and the boat of Mr. Michel Esq., Resident of Nagore, took Danish pass and flag the sale being made in the name of inhabitants of this colony paying 6 per cent on the value of the ship besides taking pass and a captain of the same nationality (flag, lit.). I am labouring in this colony with that view for there is no other recourse. I believe that there will be no ill opinion about me for doing (this) without order, but it may be supposed that if time does not permit (securing previous order) one is obliged to do all (that one can) for the master's good. Therefore, I expect that you will send a letter in Portuguese granting me permission and power to show that I have authority to sell and dispose of things as may be necessary and it is because I am in this predicament that I need the paper of instruction which I may present to Mr. Michel Esq., Resident of Nagore, and other gentlemen to find out whether the flag of the King will serve and to avoid incurring heavy expenses. They however are of opinion that it (the King of Cochin's flag) will not be of any use, and it will be safer to take the flag and passport of Denmark. Hope that after informing His Majesty Your Lordship will quickly despatch the reply. Meanwhile I am and shall remain

Your Lordship's Obedient Servant,

A. B. Da Cruz

Tranquebar 10th June 1793.

Today the English gentlemen have taken Carecal, the Captain of the flag demands a salary of Rs. 150/- per month.

4. (No. 8 of the bound volume.)

Nagapatam, 5 July, 1793.

Most Excellent Senhor Govind Menon Esq.,

in triplicate.

Received the respected (letter) of your Lordship dated the 17th June on the 28th in reply to mine of the 2nd

and 5th from which I understood what your Lordship. says there. About taking Danish colour and pass I exerted my utmost, making sale in the name of the 2nd of Tranquebar (council) Senhor Jacob Edward Colbiornson, in which matter Mr Michel Esq, Resident of Nagore and Nagapatam also helped. In duties was paid in all the sum of three hundred six pagodas and 2 fanams. We have raised the Danish flag on the Gurab—and assumed on that account a Danish name for the Gurap-Denmarca/Copenhagen. We have taken a man of the same place of Tranquebar, Jhan Pascal by name, for our flag captain on a salary of 40 rupees a month with free boarding and lodging and the right of (disposing of) twenty bags in the port where he may disembark, for his passage and expenses an additional month's pay namely 40 Rs will be paid.

All this formality is to show that the sale is (not ?) void. I shall take two papers of the same tenor which your Lordship will receive after this. It appears that this expense will devolve on the freighters also, for they would also propose that pass and another flag should be taken and they might not freight unless these were secured, but supposing this is not so, more cargo will be freighted. If freighting is not approved I shall be obliged to take areca as ballast which will serve against expense and loss, for the rate that now prevails seem well advanced, God be praised. The reply to the letter of the 10th June written from Tranquebar has not yet been received. I do not know whether it has been misdirected. About taking a Danish passport Your Lordship replies in his letter—"as may appear fit." On reflection Your Lordship will realise that for ensuring the inclusion in the cargo what His Majesty may order it is necessary to inform him about things and their conditions (anew) and to secure a plenary order. It is required for the assurance of the firms who will find it necessary to present it for their benefit. I send a list of the goods sold and disposed of. Due to the war merchants in their fright do not want to buy goods and

the price has fallen. From the list of price current at Madras it seems that goods are cheap there also. Shall make all possible effort to extract what I can and shall communicate to Your Lordship what follows on my route and other things after this. Hope that Your Lordship will receive this in great prosperity and health and after communicating to his royal majesty despatch orders to your servant.

I remain your most obedient and devoted servant,

A. B. Da Cruz.

P. S. The news is that Carecal and another village Henom by name have been taken by the English, with a boat that came from Mauritius, some people add.

5. (No. 9 of the bound volume)

Most Excellent Sir,

Received Your Lordship's letter on the 7th instant from which I understood what Your Lordship ordered. However about business Your Lordship says in the letter that His Majesty has ordered that it will not be proper to sell everything at Nagapatam as it will cause great loss and will not bring other goods in their stead as cargo for the Gurab. This causes me pain for Your Lordship would not let it be supposed that your servant would sell goods without having reliable information and news about the current price with a view to cutting extraordinary loss (it is a trading calamity). I am still getting (quotations of) the price current in Madras and Bengal and consulting my companions and sale is to be made according to the conditions the country now offers, be it profit or loss, for unloading the ship and securing freight for Bengal which will be of greater utility and offer better prospects of trade. Generally it is inconvenient to carry from one country to another a commodity consumed by the greater part of each land. For instance I cannot take sugar to Bengal for it is the country that produces (that article). I am for this reason obliged to unload (sugar) in this coast, namely

Nagapatam, Nagore and Madras, according to the condition of the country (market) for making my voyage from here and take such freights as I may find and get fresh cargo for Bengal. The price of arecas, though an esteemed article in these coasts, is so low now that at the highest it is 10 pagodas per Bhar.[26] I suppose I shall be obliged to sell areca at Madras, for it seems that Chiquiny areca is not liked in Bengal ; but in case I cannot sell I shall be compelled to carry it to Bengal. If the loss of this year, be it on land or from the wetting of the goods or from the extent of the war which broke out from the time of my arrival is considered, it is certain that we shall make nothing (no profit) and Your Lordship will form a very bad opinion of this servant as His Majesty has issued plenary orders for the disposal of everything according as the condition of the country permits.

Of the French fleet only one frigate La Gibele, Captain Magan, anchored at Trankebar for only one day ; it then left this place and had been coasting from Tranquebar to Nagapatam for about 12 days, it could not possibly go to Pondicherry as that port is watched by the English fleet consisting of three Company's ships armed for fighting and Commodore Cornwallis's frigate, I do not know where it is gone now. The frigate is very strong, well provided with many solidiers and negroes and very light but fighting has not commenced at Pondicherry as yet, only the French are firing so that the adjacent batteries may not be damaged. The boat of a French Captain that had taken Danish flag and passport in the name of Mr Pingel,

26 (From Sanskrit *bhāra*-'load'). A weight used in large transaction. In Madras it was reckoned equal to 480 lbs. avoirdupois. The word is also spelt as *bahar*, *baar*, and *barom* in contemporary Eurasian literature. (Thornton, *East Indian Calculator* p. 458 ; *Hobson-Jobson*. Logan, *op. cit.*, III, 348).

27 Sir William Cornwallis, brother of Lord Cornwallis and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Squadron in the East Indies. The frigate referred to is *Minerva*.

who is now Captain, was arrested at Madras, but was released by letters that went from Tranquebar.

I send a paper of the account of the sale made by the ship to be kept (by you) as it is a necessary formality.

Delivered the flags of the ship to Maracen Aly Amod of Almadia do Santiago de Taliseira which touched this port and have asked them to deliver (these) in our Serang's house and from there take a known man to carry and deliver (them) to the palace.

Captain Quinzemil was robbed and murdered by a French Corsair on the way to Bengal, so runs the rumour (news).

The Gurab left Nagapatam on the 9th instant for Trankebar. I ordered that nine salutes should be fired on the arrival at that port to which the fortress replied in the like manner. I remained at Nagapatam for five days more with a view to receiving cash and finishing payment.

Estrella[28]—Should have sent this boat much earlier to reach that port and to set out from there. It will be politic if Denmark having given me their flag and passport also treats with me about them. I also thought that some business might be done, but for sugar they ask 20-22 pagodas wholesale. As the weight will be heavy and the duties also are high I did not make any purchase. On this account I propose to leave for Madras to-morrow.

I send also two lists of goods sold at Nagapatam and to the merchants of Nagore.

On the 14th inst. it rained at night at Tranquebar and four feet of water rose in the street, if the rain had continued a few hours longer it would have caused much damage. These are the news that I can communicate to Your Lordship for the present. Hope that when this letter is received Your Lordship will enjoy perfect health and expect that Your Lordship will out of his goodness

28 Name of a ship ?

communicate every thing to his royal Majesty and obtain a favourable order.

As professed I am and have the honour to remain
Your Lordship's obedient and devoted servant,
A. B. Da Cruz
Tranquebar, 17th August 1793.

6. (No 5 of the bound volume)

Madras, 13 September, 1793.

Most Excellent Senhor,

Your Lordship may have learnt of my arrival at this port and other news from the letter of the 22nd ultimo. After my arrival here I obtained information about prices and am convinced that it is very necessary to sell in order to make room in the boat for taking cargo to Bengal and also not to keep money locked. For various reasons I could not wait for orders. To keep 300 fardos of areca means loss of place for 1000 bags of rice, i.e. ¼ of the cargo of the boat from which greater profit is (derived); so from various considerations sales were made the price list of which is herewith enclosed. Company's letter of credit is not available, coins have good currency in Bengal, 330 Arcott Rupees fetch 100 pagodas. At last took from Messrs. Porcher Bedhead[29] letter of credit at the rate of 350 Arcott Rupees per 100 pagodas for 21546 Rupees in lieu of 5700 pagodas.[30] The freighters have given two thousand pagodas by Mutien Chetty (two thousand pagodas which correspond to Bengal credit of about seventeen hundred). Besides (the ratio of) pagoda to pataca is one pataca for 10 pagodas and 15⅞ dollars per pataca.

29 Should read 'Porcher and Redhead'. The full name of the firm was Porcher, Readhead and Gardiner (Pub. Cons., 17th Jany., 1793, no. 3).

30 The figures given here seem to be all wrong. 5700 pagodas at the rate of 3½ rupees each equal 19,950 rupees and 2,000 pagodas at the same rate would fetch 7,000 and not 1,700 rupees.

About the muskets which His Majesty had ordered to secure at Madras I was told that they will not sell without receipt of His Majesty's letter and secondly I cannot have them on board the ship on account of the war as it is contrary to law.

The only news that I can give Your Lordship is that Lord Cornwallis arrived at Madras on the 7th instant, also General Abercromby has arrived from Bombay on the 1st of September. Mr. Pony arrived and Pondichery was captured on the 22nd ultimo and all the French prisoners have been brought to Madras but it is said that better order prevails at Pondichery now than before. As I am embarking today on my way to Bengal I am very busy, with God's favour on my safe arrival there shall write more clearly (lit. shall express myself) to Your Lordship. Hope Your Lordship will kindly communicate to His Majesty the dispositions of his servant.

I remain etc.
A. B. Da Gruz.

7. (No. 4 of the bound volume.)

Calcutta, 2nd November, 1793.

Most Excellent Sir,

Received Your Lordship's most respected message of the 27th ultimo in reply to mine from Tranquebar and Madras and remain thereby informed about every thing I have been ordered. As for the goods that you ask me to purchase if it is convenient in Bengal there cannot be the least doubt that I on my part shall trade in what may be convenient according to mode and time. These being still uncertain I have given information about my arrival and other news by the Tapal[31] (post) of the 12th and the 18th instant and believe that they reached you before this. The news that I can now give to Your Lordship is that the charge of the Government of Calcutta was taken on the 26th instant [*sic*] in the name on the margin (Hon'ble Sir John Shore Baronet). Lord

31 Usually spelt as 'tappal' or 'tappaul'. See *Hobson-Jobson*.

Cornwallis left Madras for London on the 10th October, these (news) they say are reliable. But the news about the French are all hearsay and nothing is certain, except it is said that Corsairs and French frigates are in the east coast. The Hunter, Captain Gallaway, on its way from Pegu after entering the river (at ?). Culpy[32] ran aground and the ship was lost.

As regards a commander for the Sivengy I am exerting myself in various ways but it is difficult to find (one), for there is none in Calcutta and I have recommended it to several (parties) promising rewards to see whether one can be obtained. Am ever awaiting the orders that may be despatched to your servant and informing[1] his royal majesty that I profess to remain,

Useless and most obedient servant
A. B. Da Cruz,
Sabbath Day (Saturday)

8. (No. 6 of the bound volume.)

Most Excellent Sir
at Cochin.

Your Lordship may have learnt the circumstances of my arrival at this colony from three letters written before. As the sale of rice is prohibited in foreign ports except ports of the English and that also on offering surety for not touching any other port whatever and as there is no heavy goods that may be of any use for cargoing the ship I resolved to make an application with the above intent to the Council chamber of this court from which I received a favourable despatch a copy of which goes enclosed for Your Lordship's better information. Consequently I cannot sell the cargo of rice at all at Galle or Colombo without the order of His Majesty so that I may not offend him or the surety by which I have to abide for I am required immediately on my arrival to send

32 Kulpi, village on the Hughli about 50 miles down below Calcutta.

His Majesty's assurance that the rice was unloaded at Cochin. As for the security of the goods and the ships Your Excellency may be informed that I am here arming six boats for cruising the sea which will be brief. My departure from this port shall take place in December. In this connection I hope that Your Lordship after informing His Majesty will quickly despatch orders sending me two letters one at Galle and the other at Colombo so that I may get them on my arrival and landing at the said ports to acquaint myself whether I should sell the entire cargo or a part or not (nothing at all). In anticipation I have kept one part (in such a way) that can be taken out. However I hope that the reply to this Your Lordship will quickly send to the said ports without failure.

I remain one who has the honour of being a useless, humble and obedient servant,

A. B. Da Cruz.

Calcutta, 23rd November, 1793.

P. S. Have a new report that there are French boats at Balasore, therefore the merchantmen that had got ready are stopped on the information and report of Capt. Turner. A Siren has this moment been explained to me in this manner.

9. (No. 7 of the bound volume).

Most Excellent Senhor,
at Cochin

I despatched a letter to Your Lordship on the 23rd instant addressed to Sr. Mesr. Rahabby which Your Lordship may have ere this received and been informed of all things. I now inform Your Lordship that the paper that I gave to the Company was one of surety (about the carrying of rice) undertaking not to sell in ports other than that of Cochin for His Majesty and shall be obliged to send proof of the rice being unloaded at the said port of Cochin, otherwise there will be a penalty of 49 thousand rupees. These terms were not for me alone but were in general for all who take cargo here.

Thus the ship has begun loading cargo. Hope that Your Lordship will inform His Majesty of everything and communicate quickly to me in Ceylon and Galle his order and what instructions there may be for this servant of his to execute.

I remain etc.
A. B. Da Cruz.
28th November 1793.

10.

To

The Most Illustrious Majesty of the King of Cochin.

Sir,

After having lived so many years in this land in peace and amity, having personal acquaintance with you and all the principal personages of this country, I am now obliged to express my sentiments to Your Majesty on account of the incivility of your people in expelling me out of the island of this place where I had set up a small house for protecting me from the sun in day time and for quiet of the night with a view to embarking in a boat, I am awaiting, considerable property belonging to me and other respectable English merchants which I have been collecting for several months. Your people, for what cause or reason I do not know, came and demolished my little house and left me no place for protection against sun. For this alone I have to inform your Majesty that this conduct of your people in causing me the above mentioned trouble I consider very injurious to myself and my nation as well as to His Majesty Ram Rajah[33] under whose protection I actually consider myself. Your Majesty have always expressed the greatest friendship for me, I cannot therefore perceive what may be the reason of this insult to a man who never offended Your

33 Probably Rāma Varmā, Raja of Travancore (1758-1798).

Majesty or any of your people. Wishing Your Majesty's health, long life and happiness I desire to remain for ever,

Sincere friend of Your Majesty,

Aycotta, 4th December 1793. Alexander W. Nicoll (?)

11.

Most Excellent Senhor,

I inform Your Lordship that today the 31st December by God's grace I have left the port of Calcutta and expect, God willing, on my arrival at the port of Galle of [*sic*][34] Colombo to obtain in Your Lordship's letters instructions relating to His Majesty's orders. But I had not the honour of receiving replies to any of the several letters written from this port. Finally as my departure from this port has been postponed for long I do not want to extend it further and pray to be excused.

I beg Your Lordship to communicate to His Majesty about my sail and departure for the present. I tender only my profound respects which being professed,

I remain

the devoted and obedient servant of Your Lordship

A. B. Da Cruz.

Calcutta, 31 December
1793.

12.

To

The Captain and Super Cargo of the
Ghurab of His Majesty the King of Cochin
Andre Bartolomeos Da Cruz.

Received at Cochin your letter written from Calcutta on the 23rd of October together with a copy of the petition to the Supreme Council of the same place wherein I find your observation about carrying rice and also that you wish that

34 Read 'Galle and Colombo'.

His Majesty's order should be obtained for selling rice and other goods at Galle and in Ceylon and that two letters of the same purport should be despatched one to Galle and the other to Colombo so that you may carry out that order with complete confidence (lack of doubt). I have already communicated the entire substance of your letter to His Majesty who was greatly pleased with your conduct in the service and ordered me to write to you that in case you have to leave Bengal in December and reach the ports of Galle and Ceylon by the end of that month you can sell all the rice and other goods that can be disposed of there and take other merchandise that can be sold at Cochin or bring cash with all care and come here with the greatest expedition. If you are well acquainted with the conditions that were imposed in Bengal about freighting rice take all care that no murmurs may be caused on that account, and make speed to sell the said 500 bags of rice in Galle and Ceylon with all articles that may find a sale there, buy others that (may find sale) are in demand at Cochin and come here with all quickness. Meanwhile may God protect you. Cochin, 31st December, 1793.

INDEX

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Page 2	Line 13	*for*	'dialect'	*read*	'dialects'. '
„ 7	„ 7	„	'an' -	„	'any'.
„ 37	„ 18	„	'frem'	„	'from'.
„ 47	„ 6	„	'Malgaazp'	„	'Malgaazy'.
„ 48	„ 12	„	'Summaulla	„	'Sumnaulla'.
„ 52	„ 6	„	'Bhatsall'	„	'Bhatsalla'.
„ 52	„ 11	„	'Barrycurin'	„	'Barrycurn'.
„ 56	„ 27	*Remove square bracket.*			
„ 57	„ 15	„	„	„	
„ 57	„ 25	„	„	„	
„ 58	„ 32	„	„	„	
„ 61	„ 18	*for*	'Supercession'	*read*	'Supersession'
„ 77	n. 2	„	'Sambhaji'	„	'Shambhaji'
„ 79	Line 27	„	'Conqueroar'	„	'Conquerour'
„ 80	„ 7	„	'y[e]t'	„	'yt'
„ „	„ 15	„	'Strongholds'	„	'Strong holds'
„ 81	„ 15	„	'Ballosore'	„	'Ballasore'
„ „	„ 29	*Insert round bracket after* 'Company'			
„ „	„ 31	*for*	'ts'	*read*	't'is'
„ „	„ 32	„	'forgett'	„	'forgott'
„ „	„ „	„	'myself	„	'myselfe'
„ 82	„ 4	„	'is'	„	'as'
„ „	„ 27	„	'you'	„	'gon'
„ 83	„ 2-3	*Put brackets around* "who lately...ships"			
„ „	„ 7	*for*	'these'	*read*	'there'
„ „	„ 19	„	'leadon'	„	'leaden'
„ „	„ 24	„	'also'	„	'alsoe'
„ „	„ 30	„	'Siedges Golcondah'	„	'Siedges of Golcondah'
„ 84	„ 13	„	'destory'	„	'destroy'
„ 85	„ 14	„	'greateness''	„	'greateness,'
„ „	„ 23	„	'Manosel'	„	'Manoel'
„ 88	„ 29	*Insert*	"rather to'	*after*	'chose'
„ „	„ 36	*for*	'this'	*read*	'the'

Page 89	Line 26	*Insert*	'Carry all away before them [illegible] heire no small' *after* 'Conclusion'	
,, 90	,, 3	*for*	'etc'	*read* 'etca'
,, 91	,, 3	,,	'himself'	,, 'himselfe'
,, ,,	,, 8	,,	'dld'	,, 'did'
,, ,,	,, 12	,,	'ye'	,, 'yt'
,, ,,	,, 16	,,	'Jahans'	,, 'Jehans'
,, 93	,, 17	*Delete*	'much'	
,, 94	,, 2	*for*	'Christians of the Malabar'	*read* 'the Christians of Malabar'
,, ,,	,, 11	,,	'broken'	,, 'broken out'
,, 96	,, 2	,,	'Thronton'	,, 'Thoronton'